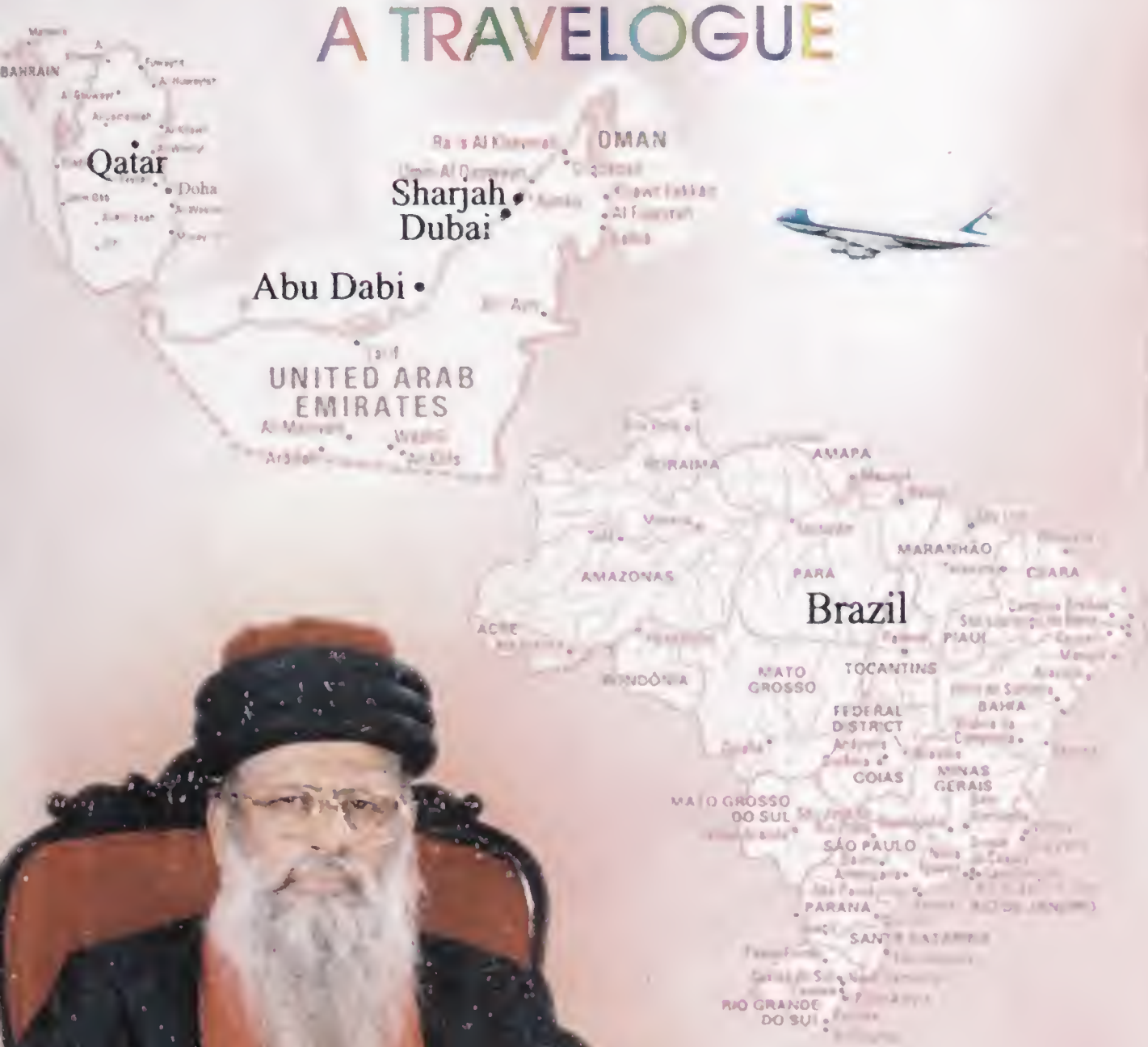
# SHARJAH, QATAR & BRAZIL

## A TRAVELOGUE



Trichur
India
2006

DR. MAR APREM

M.G. BLOCK

# SHARJAH, QATAR & BRAZIL

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**Three journeys in August 2005,**
**Oct-Nov. 2005 and February 2006**

**Dr. Mar Aprem** D.Th., Ph.D.

**TRICHUR, KERALA**
**INDIA**
**2006**

**Sharjah, Qatar & Brazil**
(English)
A Travelogue

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## CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| etailed Outline | 6 |
| oreword by Bishop Dr.Mar Andrews Thazhath, ichur | 9 |
| NTRODUCTION | 11 |
| In Yonkers & New Britain | 17 |
| *August 10 to 26, 2005* | |
| Sharjah to USA | 24 |
| *October 16 to Nov. 9, 2005* | |
| Tenth Holy Synod, Chicago | 32 |
| *October to Nov, 7, 2005* | |
| First Visit to QATAR | 46 |
| *November 10 to 16, 2005* | |
| Brazil & New York | 64 |
| *Feb 12 to 27, 2006* | |
| Third Trip in UAE | 79 |
| *Feb 28 to March 3, 2006* | |
| Fifty Two Foreign Trips by Mar Aprem | 84 |
| Books by Mar Aprem | 87 |
| About the Author | 90 |
| Photographs | 92-104 |

# Detailed Outline

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

65th book. Three foreign trips of 50th, 51st and 52nd.

## Chapter 2

**In Yonkers and New Britain**.. 12th August 2005 .. Internationa Conference on Indian Church History. Indian Independence Day. Tamil Koil (Church) Mr.Malaisamy. Assyrian Church in Yonkers. Baptism of Sanna, son of Munna Emmatty and Holy Qurbana. Indians and Assyrians attended. Fr.Gewargis Sulaiman. New Britian , Connecticut. Cor-episcopa Gewargis Haroon (Aaron). Holy Qurbana on August 21, 2005. Ordination of sub deacon Edwin from Iran.

## Chapter 3

### Sharjah to USA

October 16 – 22. Arrival In Dubai via Doha, Qatar by Qatar Airways. Fr. P.K. Raphael my old class mate in Seminary and High School. A return ticket to and fro Dubai via Doha cost only Rs.17,000 while the cost of the Emirates flight to Dubai was Rs.19,000. I was chief guest in a reception in a hotel for Pooram, the cultural and social organization of some Kerala people. Dr.Kassim Muhamad , the founder President of

'ooram.. I had attended his wedding a quarter of a century .go. The present President K.J.Sebastian was there to preside ›ver the meeting. Qurbana on Friday October 21, :005.Preached in YMCA, Sharjah .

)n Friday 21 Oct Fr.P.K.Raphael and I returned from Dubai. Vhen we reached Doha I had to send Fr.Raphael to Trivandrum ıs the visa for Doha was not ready. I went to Chicago. Qurbana n St.Johns Assyrian Church in Chicago on 23 rd. Fr.Kluz welcomed as usual. Sanil, son of my younger brother Windsor, ıttends this church. Tampa. Florida . Blessing the home of Lijo Antony. M.F. Antony. Joe Mooken, Alexander Alex.

**Chapter 4**

Tenth Holy Synod in Mart Mariam, Rosalle in the suburb of Chicago. Eleven prelates were present. Bishop Mar Sargis was not present. The names of the prelates. Decrees of the Holy Synod.

**Chapter 5**

First Vsit to Qatar. Ruling family. UAE. Seven Emirates. Doha airport K.J.Michael. Late Engineer K.T. Johny's daughter Jasmine and husband John. Anglican service. Archdeacon Dr. IanYoung. Preached in English service at 9 a.m. Went to Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church .Mohan Pulikodan. Fr.Shibu George of Syrian Orthodox Church.
Trichur District Souhrada Vedi R.O. Abdul Kader and Advocate C.K.Menon.

Visit to Anly, daughter of my cousin Kumari.. Mrs.Leena Davis from Pattikad near Trichur came to see me. Two other ladies from that parish working in Doha came to see me too. Sunday is a working day. Article written by Praveen Samuel.

**Chapter 6**

Brazil & New York.

9th WCC Assembly in Port Allegro, Brazil. Many Church leaders.. Cardinal Walter Kaspar. His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Armenian Church.. Metropolitan Amba Bishoi of the Coptic Church. Metropolitan George Saleeba of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Lebanon.

Stop in New York . Simon Thermadom. Geevarghese Enmatty..

Qurbana in the Mar Mari Shleeha Church, Yonkers on Sunday 26th February 2006. Indians. Breakfast. E.I.Paul, my class mate.

**Chapter 7**

Third Trip to UAE. Arrival in Dubai. Wrong baggage in Dubai Airport. Assyrians and Indians in Dubai airport. Thinothy Mooken, Engineer Zaia and others. Stay with Paul Chakola. Fr.Thomas Thermadom came from India to assist me for Qurbana. Son Majo Thomas assisting for making Pirma (fire) etc. Indians and Assyrians attended holy Qurbana on March 3rd. Preached in CSI Church before starting our Holy Qurbana. Widow of Qasha Badal of California. Visit to Assyrians families of Manny Kelaita (relative of late Mar Abimalek Tinotheus Metropolitan) Ward Zaia and Engineer Zaia George. Say with Thimothy Mooken and Paul Chakola.

# 'OREWORD

lessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta wrote to Navin Chawla, ne of those who wrote her biography, "All you do, all you rite, do it all for the glory of God and the good of all people. et your book be love for God in action." Mar Aprem letropolitan seems to follow this advice in all his writings, hether travelogue, humour, Church history etc.

rchbishop Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy of Trichur who has known lar Aprem closely, wrote in his foreword to a previous avelogue.

> The twin virtues of brevity and simplicity have made this book a nice tool of what may be called the integral prespective of a keen - eyed observer. **India to Indiana** does have a charming felicity of expression that alternates between the humorous and the serious, but never between the tawdry and the pompous. Brevity brings beauty; simplicity creates clarity, and these virtues have invested the book with a pleasing, convincing positiveness.

he present travelogue **Sharjah, Qatar & Brazil** is an example f his style of simplicity and brevity. This travelogue gives us plethora of information about the many countries he had isited. Details about the countries and churches are very nformative for the young and the old. Not only the sacred nings but also the secular details have captured the attention f this writer.

he first travelogue in Malayalam or in any Indian language is ne *Varthamana Pusthakam* of Paremakkil Thoma Kathanar. he English translation of this Malayalam travelogue was made y the famous Fr. Placid Podipara in Rome. That book gives clear picture of the Syrian Christians of Kerala as well as the oman Catholic Church in Rome and Portugal. These

travelogues of Mar Aprem do the same service to the readers about the Assyrian Christians.

There are not many books or periodicals that give information on the Assyrian Christians in Diaspora today. The contribution of Mar Aprem are unique in this field. The colour photographs of places and people are added attraction of this book.

Since Mar Aprem was made bishop and later archbishop in Baghdad, Iraq he has direct knowledge of the Assyrian Christians around the globe. This book also has a chapter on the 10th Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East held in Chicago in October 30 to Novermber 7, 2005. Such information is not available in any book. There are many Christians in all parts of the world who wait for the books of Archbishop Mar Aprem to appear so that such rare information will be available to the public.

His books, though a limited circulation, are seen in many parts of the world. He is a globe trotter and hence his books are of universal interest, especially among those who are interested to know about the Assyrian Church of the East universally. His books are not short listed for literary awards or recognition. Yet his fluid pen does not get dried. He is a talented writer with enough stamina and craze for churning out books. His travelogue of latest travels to Germany, USA, UAE, Austria and Russia are nearing completion.

I too have traveled abroad several times. But I never got time to sit down and attempt a travelogue. the author deserves the congratulations of all of us in his enthusiasm to write books. I wish Metropolitan Mar Aprem all success in his attempt to write books with positive messages to the readers.

Archbishop's House,
Trichur 680005

Mar Andrews Thazhath
Auxiliary bishop, Trichur
Syro Malabar Church

# INTRODUCTION

This is my 65th book. This travelogue contains details of my three foreign tours within a period of about half an year. It begins on August 16, 2005 and ends on 4th March 2006. As usual I have observed a lot of new things. At the same time my desire to see new places has diminished. I realize that I am getting old and I have to slow down.

I have packed this book with some interesting information for the benefit of many who learn from reading the books of my interest. I added a lot of information about the history of our church in this travelogue. My desire is that everybody should know something. Then each one will be considered useful to the community. Each one has to play a role in moulding the world around us. .

My 50th foreign trip was in August, 2005 to New York. It was only one destination by flight. But we can state that I worked in three states. New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. My conference was in Bronxville in New York. My stay for about a week was in Bergenfield, New Jersey. The ordination service I conducted was in New Britain, Connecticut. In New York in addition to the conference I conducted a baptism service in Yonkers

51st trip was for the Holy Synod held in Chicago in October 30 to November 13th 2005. I celebrated Holy Qurbana in Sharja on Friday 20th October and rushed to USA to do Qurbana in Chicago on Sunday 22nd. Before the Holy Synod started I stayed with my niece Dr. Asha Alex. I visited Tampa, Florida that week and after the Holy Synod visited Atlanta ,Georgia.

While returning after attending the 10th Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East in Chicago, USA I celebrated Holy Qurbana in Doha, Qatar on Friday, 11-11-2005.

My 52nd foreign trip was headed to Brazil in South America to attend the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in February 2006. While returning from Brazil I stopped in New York for two days and celebrated Holy Qurbana in Mar Mari Assyrian Church in Yonkers on Sunday February 26, 2006. Afterwards I flew direct from New York to Dubai, non-stop, about 13 hours or so and stopped in UAE for four days and celebrated Holy Qurbana on Friday March 3, 2006.

Soli J.Sorabjee, one of the legal luminaries of India writes in the New Sunday Express, Kochi dated June 4, 2006:

> In 1967 our Supreme Court in the celebrated case of Satwat Singh Sawhny ruled that the right to travel abroad and return to our country is a fundamental right, implicit in the concept of personal liberty guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution. The Court pointed out that a person may like to go abroad to see the world, to study abroad, to undergo medical treatment that is not available in our country, to collaborate in scientific research, to develop his mental horizon in different fields.

In my case in addition the permission from the concerned governments where we visit, I took permission also from the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV residing at present in Chicago

In April 2006 from AINA (Assyrian internet news Agency) I read about the business women in the Middle East. As it is interesting information about the modern Arab women, the news is reproduced below:

Sheikha Lubna al-Qasimi, Arabia's first female economy minister, repaired on Thursday for a 'celebration dinner'.

Their mission? Not only to foster links with Britain's commercial heart but to prove that, from Morocco to Oman, women, in this field at least, are beginning to take the lead.

'If you look at the history of Islam, even the Prophet Muhammad married a business woman,' said al-Qasimi, who holds what is regarded as the most important cabinet post in the United Arab Emirates. 'Khadija was her name, she was his boss and she recruited him to work with her,' she smiled, as the likes of Cherie Blair worked the distinctly veil-less crowd.

'The West always looks at the veil as a stigma and I think that's the number one problem,' she added, adjusting her headscarf. 'They think that if women cover themselves, they cut themselves off from important roles, which isn't correct. In the Emirates, I can tell you, women are on rollerblades. They're moving fast in banking and business.'

Dispelling myths is what the California-trained al-Qasimi does best. Since she assumed the post in 2004, the Emirates' economy has flourished. Dubai, a gambling and tourist Mecca, is dubbed the Manhattan (part of New York City) of the Middle East.

Al-Qasimi is not alone. The decision of London's 678th Lord Mayor, David Brewer, to host the dinner - in honour of the fifth anniversary of the Arab International Women's Forum - highlights the headway females are gradually making across the 22-nation Arab world.

In Saudi Arabia, where an estimated 40 per cent of the nation's wealth is now believed to be in female hands despite the strictures on women in public, a woman was elected last December to head the chamber of commerce - something unthinkable five years ago.

'Arab women are so stereotyped, but if, like me, you're from Bahrain you see change everywhere, in all sectors of business,' says Elham Hassan, a country senior partner at the international accounting firm Price water house Coopers. 'It's happening, but it's coming to different countries at different speeds and is very linked to the pace of education.'

Few regions face as many challenges as the Arab world. Economic development is seen as the single biggest impediment to peace and prosperity in the war-ravaged area. By 2020, it is estimated 80 million jobs need to be created to offset spiralling unemployment as a result of rising populations - a feat that would require unprecedented growth of up to 7 per cent a year. That and the forces of globalisation have added to the realisation that marginalizing half the workforce (in Iraq, after years of conflict, women account for 60 per cent of the population) is no longer an option.

Across the Arab world, the penny has finally dropped that women remain an untapped resource that could stoke the engines of stuttering economies and bring about social change. In Jordan, where the number of girls in higher education has rocketed, a campaign is encouraging female entrepreneurship by micro-finance and mentoring programmes.

There may be few women in top positions but their impact is huge,' says Sulaiman al-Hattlan, the Saudi Arabian editor-in-chief of Forbes Arabia. 'People are frustrated with male politicians. They've seen there's been a lack of serious effort and no serious development in the region, which has made women more credible.'

'he oil sector is helping the turn-around. In the Shell building in London last Wednesday, company executives told an audience of mostly female Arab entrepreneurs that the oil giant was reinvigorating its global campaign to recruit women, with emphasis on the Middle East. Dwindling reserves and the fact that oil supplies will become ever more difficult to extract partly accounts for the drive, but so too do the declining numbers worldwide of male graduate engineers.

There aren't enough people in the talent pool in the petroleum industry, so all companies are getting more aggressive and creative about finding them,' said Roxanne Decyk, director of corporate affairs at Shell. 'That partly explains why we've switched our search [for employees] to the Middle East and Asia and relaunched this campaign [for women].'

me details of all these three trips of mine are of interest to y many friends.

May 2006 many Indians who were proud to hear that a 17 ar old Kaavya Viswanathan was praised for girl book "How al Mehta Got Kissed, Got wild and Got a life" The book oded the market. Then as this young writer was at the height her glory she was caught for plagiarism she has been forgiven many, as she is young. Also because such a practice blishing books cobbled together by what are called fiction ctories Kaavya is considered an unfortunate victim of this mmercial evil.

In India a publisher feels happy if he can sell 3,000 copies a the first edition. But in America if a book finds a place in the best seller list it can easily sell a million copies. Kavya had shown some literary talents. She even got a half million dollars as advance for a two -book deal from an American publisher. But now as she is caught for stealing from another novel, the publisher cancelled their contract with her. The publisher recalled her book from U.K. and USA. Mr. T.J.S. George wrote in The New Indian Express, dated 21 May 2006 says that the publisher of America will not accept her books unless she writes the tell all book only she can. "How Kaavya got the Kiss of Death, Got caught and got a life Destroyed."

As this is my 65th book, I want to publish it before I complete my 66 years of age on 13 June 2006. There are two or three books, which need some more finishing touches.

I am grateful to my elder sister Mrs Leela Alex, B.A., D.S.S., M. A.( who is on a short vacation in Trichur away from sunny Florida) for reading through the manuscript of this short travelogue. She is living in America for forty-three years. She was planning to return to India along with her husband after their retirement. But like many Indians they cannot return to India, as their son and daughter are settled down in the USA. The four children growing up in Indiana and Chicago would like to see their grandma and grandpa.

My gratitude is expressed to Bishop Mar Andrews Thazhath auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Trichur of the Syro Malabar Church. I take this opportunity to express thanks to all my well wishers who keep encouraging me to write 100 books which they know that I cannot do.

Trichur 68001
July 14, 2006

Mar Aprem

hapter 2

# In Yonkers & New Britain

August 10 – 26, 2005

n 10th August 2005 I left Trichur by train to Chennai and I cked up my ticket to New York. I had to fly from Chennai to ew Delhi via a domestic airline called JET AIRWAYS. Then ong with some delegates to the First International Congress History of Christianity in India I flew to New York by italia. In Milan, Italy we had to change our aircraft where me more delegates who came from Mumbai to Milan joined . When we reached JFK airport in New York some of us ere worried as they were going abroad for the first time in e.

n Friday 12 th August we met with other delegates and mmenced our conference on Saturday 13th. On Sunday 14th hn Thermadam drove me to the Assyrian Church of Mar ari in Yonkers. I baptized Senna, son of Munna, son of eevarghese Emmatty at 9 a.m. Then we celebrated Holy urbana at 9 .30. The young priest of Mar Mari Parish Qasha ewargis Sulaiman who came from Syria to take over from .Dmitri Eskander assisted me. Fr.Dimitri was also present. wing to his sickness he had to relinquish his office of the car of the parish. Qasha Giwargis started his service in onkers parish with the Christmas of 2003. Qasha Giwargis is ung and energetic. In July 2004 he assisted me in Yonkers d six weeks later I met his parents in Detroit.

The parishioners were very happy to see me. Ivan Mirza, friend of the Indian Church from the early days of this pari when Shamasha Dr. C. Joseph Chacko used to come f Qurbana along with his wife Dr. Dorothy Chacko, was ther We had breakfast in the basement after the service. Some the regular people from the Indian Church were there. Jo Thermadam, Simon Thermadam with their families, Geor Mooken, Catherine &Tennyson, and some others were ther Reshma mother of Senna (baptized baby) is not from Keral but from Gujarat. Her brother, Dr.Minal Patel and parents an friends too were there.

Deacon Joseph Akalski , nephew of Ivan Mirza, presented m a book of history of the parish (**History of Mar Mari Churc 1965 –2005** ) recently compiled by his mother Sara Akalski. was interesting to read the name of Deacon Dr. C.J. Chacko a one of the deacons who served that parish. During the breakfa after Qurbana Bishop Michael of the Ukranian Orthodo Church met me. Qasha Gewargis told me that his sma congregation uses our church for their worship. Later his prie and deacon also came up to meet me. Usually we ask othe churches to allow their church building for our use. Now it our turn to let the small Ukranian group to worship in our churc building.

I returned to the Church History Conference. Mr.Malaisamy, retired IAS officer, now member of the Indian Parliamen conveyed the greetings of his boss Miss Jayalalitha, Chie Minister of Tamilnadu. Mr. Malaisamy is not a Christian. Ye he was very friendly with the delegates. I presented my jok

ɔk. Many delegates asked me for the book. But I had to appoint them as I had carried very few books.

Monday August 15th we celebrated the Indian Independence /. I am grateful to the Tamil Koil (Church) in New York for 'iting me to this conference. It was an opportunity for ɔlicity of our church. I was able to meet many friends in this ıference such as Bishop M.Azariah, (Retired C.S.I.bishop Madras), Bishop Ezra Sargunam of the Evangelical Church India, Dr. Dayanandan Francis, former General Secretary Christian Literature Society based in Madras, Prof.George ;nachery (well known editor of St.Thomas Encyclopedia), Jacob Vellian, of the Catholic Knanaya archdiocese of ttayam, Prof.M.M. Ninan, youngest brother of the late vernor Dr M..M.Thomas who was Henry Luce visiting ɔfessor of World Christianity in Union Theological Seminary New York city in 1966 when I was a student for STM(Master Sacred Theology) degree.

ter the conference was over on 16th I moved to the house of evarghese Emmatty in Bergenfield, New Jersey, I had ficulty in accessing my e mail in the laptop presented to me t year by Deacon Yushia of Phoenix, Arizona. The daughter Geevarghese, Miline Ann who sings in our Assyrian Choir the Mar Mari Church, Yonkers is a graduate in computer ence. She was kind enough to configure my laptop to the ;ess telephone number of her. So I was able to get messages m India and send messages. It is good to send messages m your own laptop so the messages will be stored in the ne computer.

On Friday 19 August Geevarghese and his daughter Mili Ann gave me a lift to Mar Mari Church where Qasha Gewarg Sulaiman , his wife and daughter Valentina were waiting f me. Ivan Mirza too was there. After coffee in the basement the church Qasha Sulaiman drove me to St.Thomas Church New Britian, Connecticut. In exactly 100 minutes Qasha ma it to New Britian. Cor episcopa Gewargis Haroon was waiti for me. He has changed his name to Biblical spelling, i.e Aar instead of the Arabic spelling Haroon. The name Haroon Rashid is a well known name in Baghdad. I must inform m readers that many Assyrian Christians use names that sou that of Muslims.

After all what is in a name?

I had seen him in June 2000 in Rabban Hurmizd Church Sydney. Formerly he was Vicar in Melbourne. Recently he w in Orange County as well as San Diego in California. The prie of last year Fr.Gabri Brakia and Cor. Episcopa are mutuall transferred since April 2005.

The women were there to cook food. I tell them I do not e meat. So they prepared something vegetable. I tell them tha am diabetic for 28 years. That makes it simpler for them prepare a heavy meal. I tell them that I do not want to increa my weight more than what I have that is 72 kilos. More ide for me, to a man of less than 5 and half feet, is to maintain weight not more than 70 kilos. But to bring down from 72 K to 70 Kg is not easy.

On Saturday August 20, 2005 I talked with our Catholic Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV who was returning from Austral

Los Angeles. Patriarch was to inaugurate the Assyrian hool in Tarzana near Los Angeles. We talked about giving dination to Edwin Bakos from Iran. On Sunday 21 st I dained Edwin as Reader as well as *Heevpadiaqna* (Sub acon). He has already taken some lessons in Aramaic nguage. After he does some more studies he may be omoted as a full deacon.

the ordination service on Sunday Cor episcopa assisted me ng with two deacons from Iran, Deacon..... and deacon nipal Dumara. Banipal was known to me in March 1998 at time when Bishop Poulose Mar Poulose died in India. His her cor episcopa Dumara was with me in Teheran and Urumia en I made my only visit to Iran in March 1998.

Sunday I talked with Bishop Mar Meelis in Australia garding Holy Synod summoned to be held in 31 October 05 in Chicago. Munna's cousin Jiju and her husband Rajan re there.

n Tuesday I went to the apartment of Munna and Reshma , parents of Senna I baptised in Sunday service. I visited the artments Munna bought and was renovating in order to sell or a higher price. One gets a very high profit be such work renovated in an attractive manner.

24 August 2005 I attempted to say goodbye to our tholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV.. When I telephoned to orton Grove. Patriarch was not there in his residence. Finally question was referred to the patriarch. I. talked to Ivan Mirza end of the Indian Church in Yonkers parish. He returned my

call and stated that the Patriarch had not arrived Morton Gro yet. He gave the phone number of Shamasha Ezaria, young brother of the Patriarch who resides in San Jose, Californi After telephoning his brother's number, I had to give up. As was time to leave the home of Geevarghese Emmatty to go the JF Kennedy airport Munna came and drove me to th airport.

When I reached the security area I thought that I could wal through easily as I have no shoes to remove. One security offic asked me to grab the tray, I asked him, "What for?" He said needed a tray to empty my things from the pocket and m chain. I obeyed him. He could give tough time if he felt that was ignoring his commands.

Instead of being a rebel it is better to be friendly to the powe that be. Instead of reporting at the gate at the last moment, reached 2 hours earlier than the scheduled departure time. Tha gave me enough time to type about this last few days of m trip. The total trip was less than two weeks.

I thank God that I could travel and do two holy Qurbana i Yonkers and in New Britain, Connecticut in this trip. This wa my 50th foreign trip. The protecting hands of the Almighty Go were saving me from dangers of the journey. This was the firs journey after I completed 65 years of age, which is th retirement age of the judges of the Supreme Court of India i New Delhi.

We left New York at about 6 p.m. on Wednesday 25th and reached Milan at about 1 a. m. on Thursday early morning.

ıs about 7 a.m. in Milan. We have about 2 and half hours lay to fly to Mumbai. I tried to attach a small device sub acon Edwin of New Britain had presented me. It is called nksy's Wireless-B USB Network Adapter. I plugged it on y laptop. Both small lights Power and Link were lit giving e some hope that I was going to be connected by wireless to e Internet. I understand that this laptop could receive only oadband wireless connection. It did not work.

rhaps I have to configure something more. It may be possible there is some broadband connection in the neighbourhood. herwise it will not be possible. Then I began to type these ragraphs before I forgot. Moreover it is not easy to get time I reach Trichur. Last five trips I could not write a travelogue time. But I do hope that I will be able to write soon about is trip as well as a proposed trip to Qatar, UAE and Chicago October- November 2005

ıat will be my 51st foreign trip. If I want to add a lot of formation about these places and the churches as well as the ople I meet with I need a separate book for each trip. But ving to the lack of time I am unable to write separate detailed ıvelogue. Thus I reluctantly attempt to combine two or three ps. That means the contents are condensed.

ıt that is the only possible compromise I can make considering e plans I have to write several books on the faith of our Church d Fathers of our Church. Since I had written the first two rts of my autobiography when I completed 40 years of age d 50 years of age. I failed to attempt a similar exercise when ompleted 60 years of age. Now I completed 65 too. Perhaps an complete it when I complete 66 years of age. All those shes do not come true. Let me attempt what I can and leave e impossible tasks for the future with out a feeling of failure.

**Chapter 3**

# Sharjah to USA

October 16 – November 9, 2005

## 1 ABU DHABI

Abu Dhabi is the largest of all seven emirates with an area o 67,340 square kilometers equivalent to 86.67 per cent of the country's total area, excluding the islands. It has a coastline extending for more than 400 kilometers and is divided fo administrative purpose into three major regions.

The first region encompasses the city of Abu Dhabi which both the capital of the emirates and the federal capital. Sheikh Zyed, President of the UAE resides here. The parliamentary buildings in which the federal Cabinet meets, most of the federal ministries and institutions, the foreign embassies, state broadcasting facilities, and most of the oil companies are also located in Abu Dhabi, which also the home of Zayed University and the Higher Colleges of Technology. Major infrastructure facilities include Mina (Port) Zayed and Abu Dhabi International Airport.

Abu Dhabi's second region as the Eastern Region has its capital Al Ain city. The fertile area is rich in greenery with plenty of farms, public parks and important archaeological sites.

The Western Region, in the emirate's third administrative sector, comprises 52 villages and has its capital Bida Zayed, or Zayed City. Extensive forestations cover at least 100,000 hectares, including more than 20 million evergreens. The country's main

ıshore oil fields are located here, as is the country's largest l refinery, of Al Ruwais.

## DUBAI

ıe Emirate of Dubai extends along the Arabian Gulf coast of e UAE for approximately 72 kilometers, Dubai has an area c. 3,885 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 5 per ent of the country's total area, excluding the islands.

ubai city is built along the edge of a narrow 10 kilometer ıng winding creek which divides the southern section of Bur ubai, the city's traditional heart, from the northern area of eira.

he Ruler's office, together with many head offices of major ɔmpanies, Port Rashid, the Dubai World Trade Centre, ıstoms, broadcasting stations and the postal authority are all tuated in Bur Dubai.

ıbel Ali, home of a huge man-made port, has the largest free-ade zone Arabia housing an ever growing list of the ıternational corporations which uses the zone for both ıanufacturing and as a redistribution point. Jumeirah beach a major tourism area with a number of spectacular award inning hotels and sports facilities.

## SHARJAH

he Emirate of Sharjah extends along approximately 16 ılometers of the UAE's Gulf coastlines and for more than 80 ılometers into the interior. In addition there are three enclaves elonging to Sharjah situated on the east coast, bordering the ulf of Oman. These are Lalba, Khor Fakkan and Dibba al-

Husn. The emirate has an area of 2,590 square kilometers which is equivalent to 3.3 per cent of the country's total area excluding the islands

## 4. AJMAN

Ajman, located a short distance northeast of Sharjah's capita city, has a beautiful 16 kilometer stretch of white sand beach It is a small emirate in terms of its physical size, covering abou 259 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 0.3 per cent o the country's total area, excluding the islands.

He capital city, Ajman has an historic fort at its center, this has been recently renovated and now houses a fascinating museum, in addition to the Ruler's office, various companies, bank's and commercial centers, the emirate is also blessed with a natural harbor in which the Port of Ajman is situated. Masfute is agricultural village located in the mountains 110 kilometers to the southeast of the city, while the Manama area lies approximately 60 kilometers to the east.

## 5. RAS AL KHAIMA

Ras Al Khaimah, the most northerly emirate on the UAE's west coast, has coastline of about 64 kilometers on the Arabian Gulf, backed by a fertile hinterland, with a separate enclave in the heart of the Hajar mountains to the southeast Both parts of the emirate share borders with the Sultnate of Oman. In addition to its mainland territory, Eas Al Khaimah possesses a number of islands including those of Greater and Lesser Tunb, occupied by Iran since 1971.

he area of the emirate is 168 square kilometers, which is quivalent to 2.2 per cent of the country's total area excluding e city of Ras Al Khaima is divided into two sections by Khor as Al Khaima. In the western section, known as Old Ras Al haima, are Ras Al Khaimah National Museum and a number f government departments. The eastern part, known as Al akheel, houses the Ruler's office, several government epartments and commercial companies. The two sections e connected by a large bridge built across the khor.

## . UMMAL AL QUAWAIN

he emirate of Umm Al quaiwain, which has coastline retching to 24 kilometers, is located on the Arabian Gulf coast f the UAE, between Sharjah to the southwest, and Ras Al haimah to the northeast. Its inland border lies about 32 ilometers from the main coastline. The total area of the emirate about 777 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 1 per ent of the country' total area, excluding the islands.

he city of Umm Al Qaiwain, capital of the emirate, is situated n a narrow peninsula, which encircles a large creek 1 kilometer ide, by 5 kilometers long. The Ruler's office, administrative nd commercial, the main port and a Mari-culture Research entre where prawns and fish are reared on an experimental asis, are located here. The city also has the preserved remains f an old fort, its main gate flanked by defensive cannons.

## . FUJAIRAH

ne of the seven emirates of UAE, Fujairah is not much known. is not much developed like Dubai or Abu Dhabi or Sharjah. here are some Kerala people working there. With the xception of some small enclaves belonging to Sharjah, ujairah is the only emirate situated along the Gulf of Oman. s coast is more than 90 kilometers in length and its strategic ocation has played a key role in its development. The area of

the emirate is 1165 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 1.5 per cent of the country's total area, excluding islands.

Fujairah city, the capital of the emirate, is a rapidly developing centre which contains the Ruler's office, government departments, many commercial companies and a numbers of hotels, as well as airport and the Port of Fujairah, one of the world's top Oil bunkering ports.

## Qurbana in Sharjah

Fr. P K Raphael and I arrived Dubai Airport on Monday17 October and were received by Assyrians (Manny Kelaita, Engineer Zaiya Marcus George, Rony Parpukara, and others) and by Indians (Chacko Konikara, Thimothy Mooken, Raphy Parpukara, David and others).

On Wednesday a dinner reception was given to me arranged by Engineer Zaiya George and other Assyrians at the Grand Hotel in Dubai. Aprem Shapira, Dinkha Latchin, Rony Awiqam George, Mrs. Emmanuel Kelaita and others were present.

On Thursday I attended the Itar party of Indian people from Trichur area arranged by Dr. Kasim Muhammed from Trichur working in Dubai. I spoke about the usefulness of fasting. I exhorted the people to develop communal harmony among muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Jews etc.

On friday October 21th Fr. Rephael and I celebrated Hoily Qurbana Emirates National School in Kuwait Road, Sharjah at 10 am. More than hundred jpeopleform India and Assyrians were present on evening of Friday I left for Chicago via Doha

nd London and Fr. Raphael returned to Kerala.

## )urbana in Chicago

)n sunday October 23 I celebrated holy Qurbana in St. John's ıssyrian Church in Chicago. Fr. Kluz, Vicar of the church /elcomed me. The Church was full. There was a breakfast in ıe basement of the church in memory of the 1st death anniver-ary of one of the Church memobers. I have conducted holy )urbana in this Church not only for Easter of 1977 at the invi-ation of Archdeacon Sadok de Mar Shimun, but several times ince 1996 after Fr. Kluz had taken charge as the Vicar of this hird generation Assyrian church after the death of Archdeacon adok de Mar Shimun.

## Tampa, Florida

)n Wednesday 26th October I blessed the house of Liju Antony nd Aneena and Joshua. Aneena is the daughter of Fr. Lazar Madathumpady and grand daghter of late Archdeacon Joseph Mekatukulam. Liju's father Mr. M.F. Antony is the President of the Voice of the East Magazine committe. He was my class-mate in the Chaldean Syrian High School in Trichur.

Though we have six families from Trichur, India in Florida State they are all far from each other. Dr. Jose Mooken, brother of mine and Prof. Dr. Alexander Alex, brother-in-law of mine had also visited me in this house in Tampa on the day of house varming. I had no time to visit them in Orlando, Florida.

## Atlanta, Georgia

)n Monday 7th November 2005 after the meeting with the Catholicos Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV and other Bishops in the

Holy Synod I said good-bye and rushed to the house of my niece Dr. Asha Furlow. Bidding good-bye to Asha's children Sophie and William and to her husband Paul, my nephew Sanil Mooken drove me to the O'Hare airport. I could also tell good-bye to Brianna & Christina, daughters of Dr. Saje Alex, brother of Dr. Asha. At the airport I made some telephone calls to those who were trying to contact me by phone.

I also telephoned to Merryl Akarapuram, daughter of Johny Chackola, Trustee of Mar Gabriel parish, Mumbai I told her that I would not be able to visit her in Tallahassee in Florida, as my schedule in Atlanta was very limited and Tallahassee, Florida about 4 hours by road from Atlanta.

.At Atlanta airport I was picked up by Jos Mookken, son of George Mookken of New York. I must note that I write my family name as Mooken. I prefer to save one 'k' from the family name. The new house is in a suburb called Lawrenceville. Many new houses are being constructed. People are moving out of the city. Since most people own cars they prefer to live far from the busy cities. Jos Mookken's mother Elsie was there. She is a retired teacher and daughter of Joseph Thettayil , the drawing Master of Chaldean Syrian School in Trichur. When I became a deacon, priest and later Metropolitan 37 years ago this teacher of mine was very much proud of his student. His whole family has been very supportive of me.

Elsie, aged about 71, is a diabetic patient. Knowing that I am a fellow sufferer like her she supplies me insulin, syringes accu check strips etc. She wants me to live long and to be active for the church. She wants me to be careful about food. She admits that eating rice increases diabetes but holds the view that the

hinese food does not do much harm to the diabetic patients. do not agree with this theory. Most of the diabetic patients ill find some excuses to eat well knowing very well that such laxation on diet will increase complications

he next day when Jos Mooken entertained me for a dinner in e Chinese restaurant she encouraged me to eat more because her experience she has no problem with the Chinese food. I ope some people with some skills to verify this "theory" will research and publish their results if it is true. Then there ill be more rush in Chinese restaurants.

n Tuesday 9th November I did the blessing of his house as ell as the baptism of his second baby by the name John Jos Iookken. The first baby Joshua Mooken was baptized in richur, Kerala. In our churches outside India we do not give ommunion to the babies during the service of the baptism. nly in India we have that practice.

n Wednesday 10th November I flew from Atlanta to Chicago. Iy niece Dr. Asha had come to the O'Hare airport with my vo pieces of heavy baggage. I went to her house to check e-ail and to eat a quick lunch. I had to telephone to Dr.George iraz and to arrange to pass on one copy of the Nomo canon f Mar Abdisho recently printed by Georgia Press. I had to ake to some more telephone calls.

Vhen we reached the O'Hare airport we were directed to the ext parking lot as the one we went was full. Then we thought at we could park in the next parking lot and ride the train. ut that parking lot was too full and we were directed to the ext. Thus we had to wait for a bus, then we traveled by train nd finally we reached the departure area of the airport. Thank

God we did not have to travel by boat. To travel by bus and then by train was too much with baggage. If Dr. Asha were not with me I would have failed to make it.

In the past I have carried one bag and drop it in one place and get back to take the second. Nowadays we are not allowed to leave any bag unattended. The suspicious baggage are towed away and destroyed. They think that there is a bomb in every unattended bag. I am sure that they are wrong. But I cannot argue in my favour. There may be one bomb in one unattended baggage; but the chances are one in a million.

At 6.p.m.on Wednesday 9th November I commenced my return journey. On Thursday morning I was in London. After a couple of hours in the transit lounge I boarded the Qatar Airways flight to Doha. At 8. 45 p.m. of the same day I reached Doha. I had to put my clock back by 9 nine hours. The time in India is 11.30 hours behind Chicago. Qatar is 2.30 hours behind India. It is one hour behind UAE. It is in the winter. The difference of time in summer between Chicago and India is only 10.30 hours. At the same season the difference between New York and India will be only 9.30 hours.

The details of the 10th Holy Synod are treated as a separate chapter. It is usually not available in regular books. Nevertheless these decrees are to be publicized more widely than it is done now. A travelogue is not a proper place to publish the decrees of the Holy Synod of any Church. But this travelogue has a claim to include church history in its pages. It will be useful for the general readers to have a peep into the inside affairs of the Church.

hapter 4

# Tenth Holy Synod

Oct 30 to Nov 7, 2005

ıe Tenth Holy Synod met in Chicago under the auspices of e Mart Mariam Church at Rosalle, near Chicago. We had et the 8th Holy Synod in the same church. So the volunteers d the ladies who prepared food for us were familiar people. r. Kando Makko was there to help us. The 9th Holy Synod o was in Chicago, but in the Mar Gewargis Cathedral.

ıe hotel we stayed this time was slightly better than the last ıe. At least we had Internet connection for my laptop, which as very useful.

ut of the 12 prelates eleven were present. Bishop Mar Joseph ırgis of Baghdad was in California. He did not come to hicago. He was present for the 9th Holy Synod when we met Mar Gewargis Cathedral in 2004. As a matter of fact Bishop Iar Yosip Sargis had come out of Iraq more than three years go along with his mother.

he decrees of the Hoy Synod were announced in the website r the Church members as well as outsiders to understand hat their leaders were doing in the Holy Synod. Apart from ıe decrees it was a time to meet fellow bishops. The Ietropolitan of Iraq had come from Baghdad. So was the shop from North Iraq had arrived from Dohuk. Both these elates could not attend the 9th Holy Synod in 2004. We could

listen to the reports of the bishops from various countries abou the progress our churches were making in different countrie Of course we were able to listen to the difficult situations ou bishops were facing in distant dioceses.

In some countries Assyrians were refugees or beginners. It wa not easy to raise funds to construct churches for our people The bishops were involved in building churches in Toronto Phoenix, Arizona, Detroit, Chicago, India etc.

The tenth Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East wa in session from Monday, October 31 up to Monday, Novembe 7, 2005 in Illinois (USA) under the presidency of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, with the participation of the following prelates:

1. His Beatitude Mar Narsai, Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria & Europe and Patriarchal Vicar;
2. His Beatitude Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of Malabar and all India;
3. His Beatitude Mar Gewargis, Metropolitan of Iraq, Russia & Jordan;
4. His Grace Mar Aprim Khamis, Bishop of Western USA;
5. His Grace Mar Meelis Zaia, Bishop of Australia & New Zealand and Secretary of the Holy Synod;
6. His Grace Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Western California;
7. His Grace Mar Emmanuel Joseph, Bishop of Canada;
8. His Grace Mar Odisho Awraham; Bishop of Europe

His Grace Mar Afram Athneil, Bishop of Syria;

. His Grace Mar Isaac Yosip, Bishop of Nuhadra (Dohuk) and Russia;

. Rev. Archdeacon Yonan Yoel, Notary of the Holy Synod;

His Grace Mar Sargis [Bishop of Baghdad] was not able to attend the Holy Synod, but sent his suggestions to the Holy Synod by way of an official letter.

ter His Holiness had given a paternal exhortation to his other prelates in attendance, in profound prayer and pplication to the Lord of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, o in his compassion and grace has preserved this Holy tholic Church and the fold of this Assyrian nation. We write all our spiritual children informing them that we learn from story that in the year 612 B.C. the city of Nineveh fell, gnaling the fall of the Assyrian Empire. During the course the Assyrian Empire, however, the Assyrians were those at handed down civilization and from which other nations nefited culturally and nationalistically. However, when lvation was given by God for the whole race of mankind by sus Christ our Lord and God—and when the Christian Gospel ached the East—the Assyrians were, without a doubt, the st people to receive this Message and propagate it selflessly the four corners of the earth.

l throughout the history of the Church the fathers and children this Church suffered numerous persecutions, and have nded down the Church by the blood of their necks, braving urageously all the powers and enemies of the Church. Since e beginning of the 13th century, and particularly since the

reign of the Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Timothy II (in 1318 the Church came to be defined and limited in the region c Assyria—save for one archiepiscopal see in the south of Indi which exists to this very day. The Church, under the guidanc of the Patriarch, has been the umbrella under which protectio the Christian faith and the Assyrian nation—as well as th Assyrian language—have been preserved. In years past man struggles and factions arose against the Assyrian Church an nation, the primary and foundational aim of which has been t wipe out and strike the body of the Church which ha perpetually been, and still is, the guardian who keeps watc over the salvation of her children, and guards the existence o the Assyrian nation.

Based on the above, we request of you all—our faithful an zealous sons and daughters of the Church of the East—tha you remain aware and cautious for the preservation of holy heritage of the Assyrian Church of the East. The members of the Synod will continually labor without rest for the preservation of the faith, rites, sacraments, apostolic tradition and hierarchy of this Church. We ask that you obey and honor the canons and hierarchy of your holy Church, for this is a gift handed on to us by our holy forefathers. It is also the obligation of each and every one of us to propagate and hand on this precious, ecclesiastical heritage to the generations that shall succeed us.

We supplicate God to give us strength that we may strengthen the Church's spiritual, apostolic and holy dimensions, and to increase faith, love and harmony in the hearts of the children

the Church. We ask the Lord to guide those that labor in tional foundations and cultural organizations that they may llaborate in a spirit of love and harmony, laboring selflessly r the glory of the good of their nation and for the preservation their existence on the land of their once-glorious, historical me-land.

e beseech the Lord of Hosts to give hope to the children of e country of Iraq, including those from our Assyrian nation— gardless of their ecclesiastical affiliation—and to remove om them this dire and difficult in which they have been unged, so that they may arrive at the harbor of tranquility d happiness and taste of the fruits of human freedom which od has granted to all men, and that they may reap from their h homeland the blessings and fruits which give a restful and cure life. We pray for divine guidance and wisdom for all e government officials of Iraq so that they may be able to fill e needs of the Iraqi people without bias by securing their man, religious and ethnic rights for the greater good and ccess of their country.

all of the faithful of our Church living in the blessed untries of the Middle East, and all those in the Diaspora, we ay that the merciful God preserve them happy and content, d bestow upon them and their respective countries all avenly blessings. We further pray that they continue to be, they have been in the past, faithful and obedient citizens of eir countries so that they may offer their utmost for the greater od of their respective country and all their neighbors

belonging to the various confessions, for Our Lord asks this c all of us as true and faithful followers of the Christian faith.

This holy convocation of prelate-members of the Holy Syno under the presidency of the Exalted Father, Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos-Patriarch, has decreed the following synodica decrees for the benefit and preservation of the Holy Apostoli Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. We are hopeful that th faithful of our Church will hold to them in all faithfulness an obedience:

I. An epistle will be sent to His Holiness Mar Addai II Catholicos-Patriarch of the Ancient Church of the East, i which we offer the suggestion that the prelates of both branches [of the Church of the East] gather in a commor synod in which they may discuss a way to bring about ar end to the reality in which both branches are presently find themselves in.

II. The Synod received the request of the faithful of our Church in Iran to have a bishop who may administer that diocese, which these many years has been administered by His Holiness the Patriarch. The Synod, therefore, has agreed to discuss this request and take a course of action that this see may be filled as soon as possible.

III. Concerning the case of the diocese of Western California and the divisions and strife between His Grace Mar Bawai Soro and the faithful of the parish of Mar Yosip in San Jose: it was requested of His Grace by the Holy Synod that a delegation of prelates go to the diocese of Western

California, and in particular to the parish of Mar Yosip in San Jose, that it may investigate the possibilities of finding a way to end the conflict between His Grace and the faithful of Mar Yosip Parish in peace and love. This was intended to give a helping-hand to His Grace by the Holy Synod. However, we are grieved to see that His Grace responded that he would not accept this at all, neither in any other way. The Synod also discussed the two uncanonical letters written by His Grace to His Holiness the Patriarch, dated April 2, 2005 and June 30, 2005. The Synod decreed that anepistle be sent to His Grace Mar Bawai in which it will beasked of him that he gives his response concerning the decrees of the Holy Synod concerning the two cases mentioned above, for he was not present on the last day [of the sessions of the Synod] for the signing of the decree of the Synod. Therefore, a letter was sent to him on Monday, November 7, 2005 (see the letter to His Grace Mar Bawai Soro attached to these decrees). His Holiness demonstrated in writing during the synod and proved that the contents of both letters of His Grace did not contain any shred of truth, and are therefore not acceptable because they have been founded upon the personal delusions of His Grace Mar Bawai, based on untruthful sources. Therefore, we await the response of His Grace on Friday, November 11, 2005. The Synod will inform the faithful concerning the final outcome of this case.

7. The Synod decreed that the *Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Religious Education* shall temporarily be

administered by the Secretary of the Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East—His Grace Mar Meelis Zaia.

V. It has been decreed that His Beatitude Mar Gewargis Metropolitan of Iraq, shall be responsible for administering the pastoral needs of the faithful of our Church who are presently in Jordan. From the Sacred Scriptures we learn that Our Lord Jesus Christ confirms the fact all the Christian faithful are one (John 17:21), i.e., in the one bond of faith and love founded upon the apostolic and evangelic Good News of salvation—that we become one flock and one fold whose Savior and Shepherd is Jesus Christ (John 10:11). Our Lord, in his bountiful love for the faithful sons and daughters of the Holy Church commands us to love one another even as he has loved us, and that the world may know that we are his true disciples if we love one another with true love that knows no guile (John 13:34-35). The fathers of the Church in the ecumenical councils, in particular the first ecumenical council of 325 A.D. and that of Constantinople of the year 381 A.D. confirmed the symbol of faith of Nicea which became the foundation and summary teaching regarding the orthodoxy of the Christian faith. The orthodox faith in the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—of one God, one Essence and one Will. Therefore, there are three *qnome* in one God—one might, authority and Lordship. The three *qnome* of the Godhead are equal in nature but distinct in attributes, that is, of Paternity, Generation and Procession. Therefore, according to the attributes, the Father is the one who 'gives birth,' and cannot be called

the 'generated' nor the 'one who proceeds.' Also, the Son is the 'generated' and cannot be called the one 'who gives birth' nor the one 'who proceeds;' also, the Spirit 'proceeds' and cannot be called the one 'who gives birth' nor the 'generated.' Also, that Jesus Christ is born of the Virgin Mary and is acknowledged to have two natures, that is, true God and true man. This union of the two natures and two *qnome* is preserved in the inseparable union of the one Person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Assyrian Church of the East—according to the apostolic faith and foundation rooted in the doctrine of the Apostles, preserved in the Gospel and apostolic succession and established in the Nicean symbol of faith—believes that the Church of Christ is apostolic and catholic and contains divers peoples and cultures, and is not limited to one particular nation. Again, the Assyrian Church of the East believes that it is a part of the universal Church of Christ, which is universal and catholic, containing all peoples and nations of varying languages and cultures. This is, therefore, a confirmation of the command of Christ that his true disciples—born spiritually of water and the Spirit in the waters of holy Baptism and given the gift of adoption of sonship and made communicants in the living and holy Oblation of the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ—each member of the common body of the Church of Christ becomes one with Our Lord. Once we have become one with Our Lord, in like manner we all become one in the unique communion with Our Lord and heirs of his holy promises. The Assyrian Church of the East reveres

and confesses the priesthood and the rites and sacrament of every apostolic Church, as well as those that confess and revere the Nicean creed, even though there may be minute differences and distinct particularities that have arisen over the course of the 2,000-year history of Christendom on account of geographical, cultural and linguistic divergences. Based upon this Evangelic foundation and doctrine—which are rooted in the teaching and command of Christ that promote genuine love among all the true believers who have been baptized in and put on Jesus Christ—the Assyrian Church of the East has always, does and will offer every spiritual service to every baptized Christian who is distant from his Mother Church, and will never coerce them to become her members. According to the rite of SS. Addai & Mari the Apostles, which anaphora is unparalleled in its antiquity and tradition in the whole of Christ's Church, and which openly witnesses to the truth of Christian love and the original teaching of the Early Church, that only those who are un-baptized and those that who are not willing to receive the Eucharist (for whatever reason) that they are to be separated from the body and communion of the Church. The Holy Synod, therefore, decreed by the majority of the body:

VI. Concerning the dialogue of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church: the Synod recalls that since 1984, during the encounter of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch and the late Pope John Paul II at the Vatican, the Assyrian Church of the East and

the Roman Catholic Church initiated a dialogue of Christian love, harmony and fraternity with each other. In 1994, the heads of both these Churches sign the *Common Christological Declaration*, from which time (in a spirit of mutual respect and Christian love) a Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue was established between both Churches. This committee went ahead with their deliberations until they arrived at offering both Churches the *Joint Declaration on Sacramental Life*. This document, which we have not yet signed, signals the end of the second phase of dialogue between our two Churches. However, a letter was received from the Cardinal President of the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* of the Roman Catholic Church (dated November 21, 2003) in which it is indicated that the position of the Church of the East must be made clear before the document on the sacraments of the Church is signed, and that only then we may proceed to the third phase of dialogue. We learned, however, that the agreement on the sacraments is an essential condition for the completion of the third phase of our dialogue. Since the Church of the East sees that the third phase of our common dialogue leads us to the reception of the authority of the Church of Rome, we have therefore decided that we shall not go ahead with the signing of the document concerning the seven sacraments. Had it not been for this pre-condition, the Synod was most-willing to have gone ahead with the signing of the document on the sacraments between our two Sister Churches.

VII. By the aid of God and in conjunction with the pastoral visit of His Holiness the Patriarch to Iraq in 2006, it has been unanimously decreed that a patriarchal administrative center be established in the city of Arbil, for we read in the annals of Church history that Arbil was once the patriarchal headquarters of the Assyrian Church of the East. Also, the fact remains that the number of faithful of our Church is steadily increasing in the north of Iraq.

In conclusion, the Holy Synod offered thanksgiving to our compassionate God or the guidance of the Holy Spirit and for all the gifts of the Spirit. By the grace of Christ, the Holy Synod was adjourned on Monday, November 7, 2005 A.D

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all; Amen.

Signatories:
+ Khnania Dinkha IV
Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East

+Narsai Elias Debaz
Metropolitan of Lebanon, Syria Europe and Patriarchal Vicar

+Aprem
Metropolitan of Malabar and all India

+Gewargis Sliwa
Metropolitan of Iraq and Russia

+Aprim Khamis
Bishop of Western USA

| | |
|---|---|
| Yosip Meelis Zaia<br>shop of Australia & New Zealand,<br>ecretary of the Holy Synod | +Bawai Soro<br>Bishop of Western California<br>[no signature] |
| Odisho Awraham<br>shop of Europe | +Emmanuel Yosip<br>Bishop of Canada |
| Afram Athniel<br>shop of Syria | +Isaac Yosip<br>Bishop of Dohuk & Russia. |

ishop Mar Bawai Soro refused to accept a transfer from alifornia to Iran and Russia.. Hence he was expelled from e Church. This event has brought this Church again to indulge the civil suits, group games etc. It is sad to find divisions veling in Christian Churches.

## Chapter 5

# First Visit to Qatar

November 10 to 16, 2005

History

Archaeological discoveries, inscriptions and artifacts prove that the land of Qatar was populated as early as 10 000 – 8000 BC.

In the middle of the 1st century AD, Pliny the Elder referred to the nomads of the area as the Catharrel – an apparent reference to their constant search for water.

One of the first maps of the world, the map of Ptolemy in 2nd century AD, shows the word "Catara" at the head of the Bay.

Qatar played an important role in the Islamic civilization when its inhabitants participation in the formation and provision of the first naval fleet, which was assembled to transport the army during the Ismalic conquests.

During the 16th century, the Qataries aligned with the Turks to drive out the Portuguese. Subsequently, along with the entire Arabian Peninsula, they fell under the nominal rule of the Ottoman Empire of four successive centuries – with the real power and control remaining in the hands of the sheiks and princes of local Arab tribes.

In 1916, a treaty was ratified with Britain in which Qatar became a British Protectorate.

ıe full independence of Qatar was announced on 3rd ptember 1971.

## The Ruling Family

ıe Emir, His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, ɔk over the reigns of power on 27th June 1995. He is tolerant other religions granting free land to construct Churches.

ı 5th August 2003, H,H. the Emir announced the appointment his son, H.H. Sheik Tamin Bin Hamad Al Thani, as Heir ɔparent.

ıe ruling Al Thani family was among a tribal group who ttled for a long time at the "gibrin" oasis in the southern ıjad, before their arrival in Qatar during the early 18th century. itially, they settled in Zubara in the north of the peninsula, ɔving to Doha only in the mid 19th century.

ıe name Al Thani is derived from that of the family's ancestor ıani Bin Mohammad Bin Thani who was the fiirst Sheik to le over modern Qatar during the mid – 19th century.

ıe family is a branch of the ancient Arab tribe, the Bani meen, whose discent can be traced back to Mudar Bin Nizar.

## Government

ıe Emir is a ruler of the State. Rule in Qatar is hereditary thin the family of Al Thani, whereby power is transferred ɔm father to son. In case no son is available, power is ınsferred to the person whom the Emir chooses within the mily of Al Thani.

His Highness the Emir is the head of the constitutiona authorities, holding both legislative and executive powers. Th Emir appoints the prime minister and ministers.

The Council of Ministers (Cabinet), The Supreme executiv authority in the country, assists implementing the genera policies of the state.

A 35 members advisory council debates economic, politica and administrative matters referred to it by the counci ministers.

The constitutional development of Qatar of Qatar has kept pac with the rapid development and economic growth of th country. The first provisional constitution was issued in 197 upon independence. In April 2003, an overwhelmin000g 96.6% of Qatari voters said "yes" to a draft permanen constitution, which became effective on 8th June 2005 transforming Qatar into a democracy.

In 1999, free election were held to form a 29-member Centra Municipal Council for the first in Qatar's history – and women were allowed to vote and run as candidates.

## International Relations

Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strives continuously to establish and develop close direct ties of cooperation with all peace-loving countries and peoples of the world. Within that

licy, it is keen to participate actively in efforts to deal with : concerns

d challenge that the Gulf region encounters. In addition to veloping bilateral ties, the State endeavors to pursue closer ations with other nations through its participation in various ganizations and agencies at regional, Arab and international vels.. Qatar was actively involved in the discussions leading the foundation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and sted a number of their Supreme Council Summit meetings.

ne country is a member of the following organizations:

e United Nations (UN)

e Organization of the Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries PEC)

e Arab League

e International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

e World Trade Organization (WTO)

e World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

e Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)

addition, Qatar has 40 diplomatic embassies and 6 general nsulates abroad, with over 50 foreign Diplomatic presentatives in Qatar.

## Language & Religion

The official language of the country is Arabic, but English widely spoken and understood.

All official documents (such as visa and resident perm applications) must be completed in Arabic.

Islam is the official religion of the country, and Shari'a (Islam Law) is the principal source of legislation.

## Education

Under the able Leadership of The Emir, His Highness Sheik Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani Educational Systems wer provided adequate focus and to complement the overa objective Her Highness Sheika Mozah Bint Nasser Al Misnad vision to establish quality international Universities in Qata was realized.

Hence in a major develpment, the New York based Corne University established a branch campus of its Medical Schoo in Qatar with North Atlantic College, Virginia Universit Common wealth and Texas University following suite unde an agreement between the University and Qatar Foundatio for Education, Science and Community Development.

## The Revolution

Translating the idea into action the state of Qatar is and will b leading by example as subscribed within the innovative forur of education. This revolutionary vision remains in the genera stream, of the educational system, of the nationals as well a expatriates especially within Indian schools that, would go

ng way in implementing this revolutionary idea thus creating competitive environment.

this conducive environment, some leading names have tablished themselves with the Indian curriculum and the new ıtry; Birla Public School has joined hands with proactive dividuals, to provide quality education for Indian Expatriates ving in Qatar.

he Birla Group of Schools

lending Indian cultural values with modern educational chniques, the Birla Schools was founded in 1987, by Smt ıd Sri B K Birla in memory of Sriyut SGD Birla. Aiming at nparting high standards of education, which includes ademic excellence, and appreciation of nature, awareness contemporary issues, and participation of a wide Variety of ıtdoor and indoor sports.

ri Lakshmi Niwas Birla the eldest son of GD Birla, with great ıtience and immense foresight set up a Hindi school in 1940. e envisaged a new generation of children fortified with sound ılues, well equipped to meet the challenges of the new era.

he teaching faculty is drawn from the best public schools ho with their dedication and commitment provide the best opportunities for students. The academic programme is ocused to prepare each student to meet the challenges of the entury.

he Birlas provide, a diversified curriculum comprising of, CSE/ IECSE/CBSE, bringing the best from the world of

education. Birla Schools inject funds every year, to provic basic education, to thousands of rural children in India. Son of the prominent schools and educational institutions inclu "Birla Institute of Technology and Science. Rajasthan", 'B Birla Center for education for Boys in Maharastra', 'Ash hall Girls Higher Secondary school .Kolkota', and Bir Institute of Management Technology New Delhi.

According to Dr.Mrs.Sarla Birla and Mr. B.K. Birla, in the message to the Qatar faculty and parents, stressed th importance of quality education. "providing education children is the sincerest prayer to God and the greatest servic to humanity which equips them with spiritual, oral and huma values".

The Qatar chapter

The need to inculcate quality education, to the Indian Expatriat Community, the likes of Dr. M.Thomas, K.C.Lukose an C.V.Rappai transformed an idea into action, by establishing school, focused on Quality education.

Birla School would be an educational marvel that would to b bench marked by all other educational institutions in the countr of Qatar to develop a comprehensive and efficient educationa plan. The winning faculty team of BPS has a definite purpos in shaping the future of the children. The curriculum is simila to that of an Indian syllabus keeping in mind diverse areas c people and culture. The quality of training offered will b decisive in making the best of student personalities.

he principal of the School Mr. Eugene being involved from ıe inception of the school, plans to face and manage the ıallenges and move away from the routine principal profile. redited with English honors from Delhi University and M.Ed om Annamalai, Madras, Mr. Eugene has been associated with ›me of the prominent schools like, Frank Antony Public :hool, New Delhi (principal 12 years), The Bachur School 'arjeeling (principal, 5 years), Indo European School Rajasthan ›rincipal 2 years), Vice principal St.Peters School, Maharastra.

he faculty members are selected based on merits, who are 'ell versed with the curriculum. The first phase of recruitment 'ould be from India and the remaining from the wealth of ualified people within the Indian Community in Qatar. The ɜlected faculty members have undergone an orientation rogramme in order to understand the desired quality levels ıat need to be maintained as per the BPS standards.

or an efficient and productive operation of the school a ompetent core management team has been evolved with its ınction of managing the over all functioning of the school. ıarti Oberoi who heads, the core management teams is credited ıith a MBA in finance as well as in Marketing from University f Houston Consad Hilton Group, Texas. Aarti ensures that PS is working very closely with the local Ministry of ducation including the management of BPS in India to prepare ıe students in Qatar for all the positive changes in their personal ›evelopment and Growth".

At BPS, we bestow close attention and clear emphasis on the xtra curricular activities to guarantee that the products of BPS

are capable of facing the challenges of the present century wi courage, wisdom and positive action. This is based on thorough research that was conducted on the needs of expatria students in the Gulf region", said Aarti Oberoi. This is how w convert the BPS motto "Enlightenment through Educatior into a reality in Qatar.

Professor V.A.Kuriakose, an Educational Expert with varie experience, both in India and in Doha-Qatar, has taken th mantle of - Manager and Educational Consultant, Birla Publi School-Qatar. According to him every child is a unique gift c God, profoundly talented, who is placed in the hands of parent and the school. He said that at the Birla Public School, th child is at the center of the educational spectrum and the BP educational strategies are geared to extract the dormant taler of every child enabling him to face the challenges of moder life. His experience in the educational sphere in Doha ha enabled him to direct his energies in a special way to moul the child in the local surroundings without losing the India perspective.

Among the 30 years of experience in the academic world, b working as Professor and Head of Department of Chemistr at the Calicut University, in a school in Doha, as a facult Member of Chemistry in the Educational department unde the supervision of Ministry of Education, State of Qatar etc are informative and commendable achievements.

'Think Global and Work Local' is an area of strength, whic would enable Prof. Kuriakose to perform his responsibilitie with a broader outlook in all related matters. The launch of th

hool website would enhance the access, for information with e least lead-time. To reinstate the commitment, BPS would : focusing on sustainable quality education with specific tention to the overall development of the child. The anagement would also like to use the forum as a platform to amine best practices for enhancing quality.

hen I reached the baggage claim area of the airport in Doha J. Michael of the Kaiparamban family in Trichur came inside e baggage claim area and carried my baggage in a trolley. I as worried that they would examine the contents of the ggage and ask me to detain the books there, as they troubled e in Dubai 3 weeks earlier. As I came out of the airport, my usin's daughter Anly and her husband Samuel Henry were aiting there. Jasmine's husband John was also there to take e to Hotel Ramada. Jasmine is the daughter of Engineer T.Johny (Kunnath family) who died in 2004 in Trichur.

.T.Johny's two brothers, late K.T.Cherukutty and Mr. .T.Antony, were Central Trustees of our church who had orked with me. Their elder brother K.T.Mathai M.A., B.L.was prominent leader of the Church. He had died of diabetes two ars before I was born. Their youngest brother Dr.Kurien unnath, a retired District Medical Officer, is serving as a ember of the sponsoring committee for recommending udents from our Church to the Christian Medical College, llore, one of the best medical institutions in Asia.. God essed that family with wealth and education.

anual Poovathingal, cousin of Fr.P.K.Raphael, was also aiting there. Elwish, nephew of K.J.Michael and his brother

Edwin and their wives were there. I remember meeting Elwis in Cochin airport many years ago when he was studying i school in Trichur. He was going to spend summer with h parents in Qatar. From Cochin to Bombay he flew in a domesti flight in which I was traveling to Bombay. I was asked to hav an eye on this boy.

On Friday 11th November I preached in the Anglican servi led by Archdeacon Dr. Ian Young who is the Chaplain of tl Church of England in Doha, Cyprus area. He had read abo our Church and my activities through the Internet. H congregation is international and inter denominational too. is a lively congregation with good singing under the leadersh of an Englishman named Brian, the pianist.

About 11 a.m. on 11th November we started our holy Qurbar in the St. James Jacobite Church near Birla Public Schod One Assyrian family was there. Andy comes from the Chaldea community in Alkosh near Mosul in Iraq. His wife is a Assyrian. They had left Iraq and were living in Australia. And and family moved here to Doha some 4 years ago. They wer happy to be attending the holy Qurbana compiled by Mar Adda and Mar Mari. Both Chaldeans and Assyrians use the sam liturgy.

Mohan Pulikodan, and Biju Mathala, members of Mar Thom Shleeha parish, Pattikad were there. Mohan's wife Tessy, wh is a teacher in English medium school, had gone through m last travelogue to correct English language. As I had not studie in English medium schools I have my Malayalam thoughts i the back of my mind even when I write or speak Englis

uently. It is strange but true that even after authoring more an 60 books in English I have to have the help of some body read the script to remove unnecessary Malayalam thought rms from the back of my mind.

here were three women from that parish who work as maids different homes of Arabs. They could not make it to the ly Qurbana, as it is duty time in the homes they work. Still ey came to see me in the evenings to seek my prayers.

r.Shibu George, vicar of the Doha parish of the Syrian rthodox Jacobite Church. He was kind enough not only to ermit his holy altar to be used for our Holy Qurbana, but also was present in the altar to assist me for the holy Qurbana. is assistant was there to get the censor ready in time. Of course e need the *pirma* ( censor) 4 times during the holy Qurbana.

riday evening there was a large gathering of 800 people from richur District. The organization called Trichur *Jillah ouhrada Vedi* has about 3000 members. There were hristians, Muslims and Hindus. R.O.Abdul Kader, President f this organization, had met me in Trichur. Advocate C.K. lenon is the Chief Patron. Advocate Menon is a businessman ho helps people from Kerala liberally.

dvocate C.K. Menon is the C.E.O. of Behsad Transport ompany in Doha. He had practiced as a lawyer in Trichur nd Cochin earlier. Since 1978 he is working in the Gulf. In nuary 2006 the Government of India gave the prestigious ravasi Award to C.K.Menon. Those who knew the hilanthropic activities of C.K.Menon opined that it was an onour long overdue.

The Central Government in December 2005 announced tha "Pravasi Prize" to him. M.A. Yusuf Ali of Lulu stores in U.A.E had received this honour last year.

I was the Chief guest. Many of them heard about me and rea my books on Jokes. So I had to tell many jokes in my speech I spoke about religious toleration. It was a good occasion t tell about our church in India as well as in the Middle East.

On Saturday 12th November I had lunch in the home of Aj Thomas. His father P.M.Thomas is the cousin of my mothe He was trustee of the St.Thomas parish in Ernakulam, Cochin Aju is an engineer in Qatar. His mother Mrs.Lilly Thomas wa staying with the family of Aju in Qatar for a short period Grandma is a blessing to the two grandchildren. After all whe a woman is a widow what shall she do?

In Kerala wives are younger to their husbands. In America it i the other way around in many cases I know. There is only on case in our church, as much as I know, where the wife is a fe months older. I had difficulty in convincing the groom's fathe to marry a bride of some months younger. According to th Indian rules the wife should be at least 18 years old and th husband should be at least 21. If an old woman of 81 comes t me wishing to marry a young man of 21 I will conduct th marriage.

The problem in India is conducting marriage for young girl between 14 and 18, although illegal. It is more in Muslin community in India. But Hindus and even Christians som time indulge in such illegal acts. The parents have their ow

:asons to conduct the marriage of their 17-year-old girl. I had ıe unhappy occasion to threaten the priest trying to conduct ıe marriage of a 17 year old. He had taken the precaution of ɔrrecting the baptism register by one year to avoid punishment 'om the Church and the government.

here was no justification for blaming the priest for the ɔrrection of date in the baptism register. Many priests and thers have opened that baptism register during the previous 7 years after the baptism of that girl. Was the correction done ıat year with the motive of getting her married a year early? I o not know whether there is some test by which one can etermine whether that correction in the register was done efore that priest came to that parish or after. Our priests are ·ansferred after every three years. My immediate need was ot to find out the culprit, but to prevent the marriage of a 17-ear-old girl illegally happening in our church.

illy's sister is also a widow. Their sister-in-law was a widow or a long time and passed away about two years ago. Lilly as an elder son Mato Thomas and a daughter; both married nd settled down in Kerala.

n the evening I went with Biju Varghese to Toastmasters nternational club meeting in Doha. This organization is an nternational organization based in Mission Viejo, CA 92690-052, USA .The readers of this travelogue, if interested to know nore about this club named **Toastmasters International** can og on to www.toastmasters.org. There are about four million eople who have learned the skills of speaking through the oastmasters programs.

On Sunday 13th November I visited the Indian Ambassadc Dr. George Joseph in his official residence, I had met him i 1992 in Moscow when I went for the launching of the Russia translation of my two joke books. His domestic helper fror Sri Lanka who gave me tea in Moscow 1n 1992 recognize me. It was a relaxed time talking with the Ambassador on man topics including ecumenical understanding with regard to inte marriages. Dr.George Joseph IFS (Indian Foreign Service) wa the batch mate of the first IAS (Indian Administrative Service holder from my Church Mrs. Mini Mathew Kunnumkal.

On Monday my cousin Kumari's daughter Anly, Sam anc daughter took me to the city Centre. I went with them jus have a look a big City Centre. Their intention was to buy me a Mobile phone Nokia. Since their son Praveen was more knowledgeable on Mobiles phones etc like many teenagers today, Sam kept phoning him home and ask for his advice tc choose the best Mobile for me. I told them I am not much interested in an expensive Mobile. About the colour of phone? I did not have much attraction to any particular colour. Finally they bought me one NOKIA phone with silver colour..

On Tuesday evening Sam, Anly and children with whom I was staying took me to airport. My cousin Jolly Mooken and his younger son Don Mooken also accompanied me. So were Jasmine and John. I usually do not like many people to come to see me off. It is waste of time for others. It is sometimes

ıisance in the airport to have a lot of people blocking the ıssengers who rush late to catch their flights.

he lady at the ticket counter wanted me to shift something om my handbag and pack it in the big bag, as my handbag as too heavy. I obeyed her instantly. I preferred to obey their ·ders without getting into an argument or clarification with ıe staff at the airport.

hen she said that my big suitcase had a weight of 33 kilos ıd therefore I should shift something from that and pack it in ıe smaller bag. I told her that both bags together did not weigh 3 Kilos. She was adamant. I do not know whether she was ;norant or she had planned to harass an old Indian. Anyhow I id not waste my time speculating correct answers to my oubts. There was no much time left for boarding the flight. hen I prayed to God to give her wisdom not to harass a man ld enough to be her father. Then she said okay. I walked faster ıan my usual speed to reach the boarding area.

t the departure gate a Kerala man asked me where was my ometown. I told him that I was from Trichur. Are you from ıe Church of Mar Aprem, the joke writer? Smilingly I replied am the joker. The passengers who understood Malayalam ıughed instantly.

efore I conclude my description of my first visit to Qatar, I ıust record here what was the impression of a teen-ager whose ıaternal grandmother is my first cousin.

# VISIT OF THE ARCHBISHOP

To me Bishops have never seemed to be any less boring tha the priests. They were like commentators who put up a poc performance. *Dr. Ian Young, Archdeacon of the Church of th Epiphany, Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, was probably th only priest I ever liked.* It was not until November 2005, whe Doha was at the threshold of the winter season, that I change my conviction.

*His Grace DR. MAR APRAEM METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF TH EAST, INDIA,* who happened to be my Mother's Uncle, visite Doha in November. I had heard a lot about him. I remembe my Grandfather saying that he was different from othe Bishops. People had a special liking for him. Popular opinio was not enough for me. I was anxious to find more about him

My first meeting with His Grace was at *Ramada Hotel,* fron where we picked him up for the Friday service at *DESS*, wher he was invited as a guest. In my entire sixteen years of life, have not even for once listened to preachers' (*with the exceptio of Archdeacon Dr. Ian Young*) sermons in Church. But thi time it was different. No other sermon was so interesting! listened keenly to his words. The skill by which the Archbisho captured the minds of the audience was fascinating. His perfec blend of Humour with Biblical teachings was something tha the audience had never experienced. *Jesus Christ* himself ha said, " *Parables are the best way to capture the listener's mind*"

Iis Excellency can be compared with the greatest orators our /orld has ever known. The applause and the cheer he received /ere much more than any other guest had received earlier. In imple words spiced with humour, His Excellency had brought is message to the mind blown masses. From then on I changed ıy view on Bishops and priests.

Ie was a sensation wherever he went. Cheers were like his hadow. I was extremely happy to have met this great ersonality. He had a charm that attracted people towards him. t was pleasure and great privilege for me to listen to him talk. Iis way of speech was quite appealing to my adolescent mind. Ie had perfected *Aramaic* and commanded the language. Even he professional *Toastmasters* were awed by his performance.

Ie left Doha within five days and I knew I would miss him nd I did.

learned a lot during his visit. One of the things that he taught ıs all was that *we must be happy in God's presence.* Attending Church services would be a lot more fun and rewarding if all he priests were like him. It is not easy to find a place in the earts of today's children and His Excellency did it with ease. Iay Mother India give birth to more people like him. He has ertainly found a permanent place in my "*Hall of Great People*".

PRAVEEN SAMUEL
DPS-MIS, Class XI A
4 NOVEMBER 2005

Chapter 6

# Brazil & New York

Feb. 12 to 27, 2006

## 9 th Assembly of the WCC

The Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches ha been summoned to meet in Brazil in February 2006.The firs assembly of the World Council of Churches was in Amsterdar in 1948. The second was in Evanston, Illinois, USA in 1954.Th third was in New Delhi in 1961. The 4th was in Uppsala, Swede in 1968. The 5th was in Nairobi in Africa in 1975. The 6th wa in Vancouver, Canada in 1983. The 7th was in Canberra i Australia in 1991 and the 8th assembly was in Harrare i Zimbwabe in 1998.

Catholicos Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun was active in the Worl Council of Churches since its very beginning. The Russia Orthodox Church joined the WCC only in 1961. Patriarch Ma Eshai Shimun came to India in order to attend the 3rd assembl in New Delhi. Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan of India wa also present in the New Delhi Assembly as a member of th host committee.

In the assembly of 1983 Bishop Mar Khamis, Bishop of USA & Canada was present along with Deacon Laurance Namato Our Church members were elected to the Central Committe of the World Council of Churches in the past. Unfortunatel nobody from our church was in the Central Committee durin the past 14 years.

ır Church is very active in the National Council of Churches India (NCCI) as well as in the Australian Council of ıurches. Our Church was kept out of the Middle East Council Churches (MECC) owing to the objection of the Coptic thodox Church.

t us hope that the Assyrian Church of the East will be active the World Council of Churches like most of the Orthodox d Protestant Churches. Personally speaking I was a recipient the WCC scholarship in 1961 and I studied in England that ar and attended a summer course at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey near Geneva in 1962.

ing an ancient Church it is the duty of our Church of the ıst to be active in the WCC. Mar Abimalek Timotheus etropolitan of India had attended the **Life & Work** nference held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1925, which later ıd to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 48. Let us hope and pray that our Church will play a gnificant role in WCC.

2006 I represented the Assyrian Church of the East. in 9th CC assembly. It was a new experience to me.

RANSFORMING THE WORLD TOGETHER was the eme. Rev Samuel Kobia, the dynamic General Secretary of WCC, Geneva and a ordained Minister of the Methodist ıurch in Kenya, wrote:

CC assemblies have been landmark events in the life of the ımenical movement for almost 60 years, gathering together ınique and comprehensive spectrum of Christians and

churches. I hope that this Assembly, being the first one in th 21st century, will mark the beginning of a new phase in th search for Christian unity, and will be characterized by its visic of a new culture and forms for the modern ecumenic movement.

**A changing global context**

The 9th Assembly is being held at a time of widesprea injustice, poverty and despair. The immense challenges whic face humankind at this time call for careful discernment of th "signs of the times", and courageous visions of hope from th ecumenical movement. Our world is in need of profour transformation.

We live in an era marked by destructive power and disgrace human dignity. Economic and cultural globalization, new form of militarism and domination, and ecological destruction hav rarely been so evident. The prevailing international econom and political models have failed to stem the tide of injustic and inequality.

The religious context is also evolving, and religious identit has returned to the public sphere in various ways. While th 20th century was dominated by confrontations betwee ideologies, "identity" is emerging as one of the characterist divisive features of the 21st century. All Christians are bein challenged to look at their identity in the context of a ne religious plurality.

**renewed ecumenical agenda**

God, in your grace, transform the world", the theme of the ssembly, is both a prayer and a hope. It reminds us that God, Christ, has offered humankind and the whole creation conciliation and new life. This inspires me to believe that e Assembly can give an impulse towards a renewed umenical agenda for the 21st century.

gainst the background of continuing conflict in Iraq and a ar on terror, the Assembly will mark the completion of the rst five years of the Decade to Overcome Violence. The ecade was launched by the WCC in 2001 as a way of obilizing the churches' peace-making efforts and resources. ne question for the churches remains: how can we together ster a culture of peace, seeking to restore the authentic nature our humanity, in a context where violence has become so evalent?

t the 8th Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1998, the WCC d the ecumenical movement made a commitment to walk in lidarity with Africa. Yet, as we meet, entire regions of the ntinent are once more facing famine. The condition of Africa allenges us to rethink what it would take to lift the continent t of poverty. It is evident that aid alone, however massive, is t the answer, and that Africans' moral strength must be at e centre of any durable solution.

here are, of course, other critical issues that the churches nnot avoid addressing at the Assembly, including social and hical ones. Since the Harare Assembly, the WCC has

successfully provided a platform for churches to discuss critic differences in a responsible way. It must continue to enab the churches to confront their differences in dialogue, and rediscover a common voice wherever possible.

I would like to give greater attention to two particular areas the future. I hope that the presence and participation of youı people will be visible and substantial throughout the Assembl Their aspirations and interests need to be heard and the involvement needs to continue well beyond the event. Secondl I am convinced that the ecumenical movement will have take spirituality much more seriously in order to nourish aı more fully undergird our ecumenical experience together.

As the ecumenical movement has looked at the proliferatic of its structures at all levels, it has become clear that such multiplication of bodies is not sustainable. This can dive human and financial resources away from ecumenical activiti in the churches and society into the maintenance of overlappir structures. I am keen that we develop a new approach t ecumenism in the 21st century, and that we seriously conside new forms and configurations.

## Refocused priorities within the WCC

Promoting visible Christian unity remains the core mission c the Council. The Assembly may also give an impetus to ne forms of work. However, as we evaluated our programme woı during the last period, it became clear that the WCC should c less and do it well.

ıe modern ecumenical movement emerged out of a series of storical streams - faith and order, life and work, the mission ovement - as well as the dynamic efforts of the youth ovements. These have provided the framework for the tivities of the WCC. In the early 21st century, it is increasingly ear that the ecumenical movement has reached an important int of transition, and that new categories of activity may be eded.

herefore expect the Council to engage in less programmatic tivities, but to deepen its involvement in strategic areas. We ıve to find new ways of relating to and communicating with ır member churches and ecumenical partners and to move wards a more integrated, interactive and dynamic way of orking with our constituencies.

reas such as advocacy and diakonia are central to the mission ıd being of the churches. In these, we will need to re-organize ır work to adapt to new opportunities so that we can integrate ır reflection and action on issues of just economy, ecology ıd sustainable development.

hurches nurturing a culture of peace, equipping themselves become moral communities and refusing the intolerable will main a central focus of the WCC's work. The ongoing tension etween different religious traditions points to the necessity deepening our relations with neighbours of other faiths, oving beyond dialogue to active collaboration in areas of mmon concern.

all areas, we need to find new ways of enabling youth rticipation, and creative approaches to ecumenical formation

and leadership training, in order that we may see young peopl becoming central actors in the WCC, now and in the future.

**Signs of hope**

We meet in Latin America where many of the concerns an challenges that I have mentioned are matters of daily life an survival. The witness of the Latin American churches in th midst of extreme injustice and the impact of globalization ca offer a model of prophetic resistance and hope, to inspire u all.

We should not underestimate the real potential of the churche together to contribute to the transformation of the world, i spite of the reality of the difficulties we face. With commo faith and a renewed hope, anything is possible. May thi Assembly once more "set up signs" of a common and visibl Christian voice and witness, for a transformed world.

The 9th Assembly of the World Council of churches met i Porto Allegro, Brazil. I was going to Brazil or to any Lati American country for the first time. Friends suggested that I could go there from Frankfurt or Amsterdam or London o Milan or Hong Kong or South Africa etc. Finally my booking was done through New York. It may look like a roundabou way. As a matter of fact I was not looking for the shortest route, but cheapest route. I know New York route was a long route. But I could get easy connection and cheaper than all connections mentioned above.

I went to New York via Dubai. I reached New York on the same day of departure from Kerala. Instead of starting from

y nearest airport of Cochin I traveled by train to Trivandrum ıd took the flight to Dubai on Monday Feb 13th morning. I ft Trivandrum and reached Dubai before 8 a.m. and caught ight to New York to reach New York before 5 p.m. of the ıme day. Of course New York is 10 and half hours behind ıdia.

n 13th February when I reached New York I had to go through ıe immigration. The man at the immigration told me that the S consulate in Chennai put my first name as Aprem and my ımily name as Mar. Since I do not know which is my family ame and which is my first name, I usually put Mar as first ame and Aprem as the family name or surname or last name. put the column of Middle name as blank in these forms. The fficials do not insist on the middle name. But first name and ıst name they should know. He changed Mar from first name ɔ Family name. I do not know whether any body has the family ame of Mar. May be I will have difficulty again in future. ut I better obey the immigration officers. It is not good to isagree with them. I first told them the American Consulate ı Chennai (new name of Madras) made a mistake in putting ıy name in the reverse order. I also told that I would obey ıim.

As a matter of fact my name was George and the family name vas Mooken till I became bishop in Baghdad, Iraq on 21 September 1968. When I became a bishop I had to take the ıame of a saint. Hence I took the name of Saint Aprem of the 4th century. Mar in Aramaic means my Lo rd. I did not explain ıll these things to the immigration officer. He may create more confusion.

Hence Fr.George Mooken became Bishop Mar Aprem. Th flight took about 7 hours from New York to Sau Paulo in Brazi When we reached Sau Paulo we were told that I have to tak my baggage and clear it at Sau Paulo. Although the baggag tag stated that it was booked direct to Porto Alegra. The official said that they do not have staff to carry the baggage to the nex flight. So I had to take it myself and carry it to the checkin counter.

I wrote the above paragraphs from the airport in Sau Paul waiting for the next flight to Porto Alegra. If it is on time a 11.55 p.m. we will reach our destination at 1.30 noon jus enough time to rush to the first plenary session at 3 p.m. where Catholicos of the Armenian Church His Holiness Aram I was to address the first plenary session.

I was glad there were some delegates from different parts of the world still in the same waiting room. That means all delegates have not reached the Assembly site in the previous night as we were expected to do. I had also planned it that way. But my search for the cheapest route and my desire to celebrate Holy Qurbana in Mar Aprem Church, Trichur on Sunday 12th morning made me to opt for this delayed flight. Since we have finished our immigration clearance in Sau Paulo there will not be any delay in Porto Alegra. It is a domestic flight. So it was easy to pass through the open gates in the domestic arrival terminal.

An international flight means that there is a lot of delay and check. I look forward to the day when people of all nations can travel without immigration check and customs clearance.

' the poor countries develop like other countries, there will ɔt be attempts to cheat the governments with passport, nmigrations etc. In spite of the restrictions strictly controlled was told that were more than two million illegal immigrants ı the USA. That was an old estimate. I am sure today there :e more than two million illegal immigrants in the USA. There :e fake passports. Then there various agencies to smuggle eople into a country. I do not know that there are some secret ınnels like the tunnel under the Hudson River or some areas eople find methods to make an illegal entry to the USA. Today ıany countries have a lot of immigrants. Even India has illegal nmigrants from Sree Lanka and Pakistan. Occasionally some re arrested. Still we do not know much about the under world nd the illegal immigrants. Migrants and the agencies which elp people to smuggle human beings. Some times people are ept in the trucks and containers where animals are transported.

'he 9th assembly of the WCC had more participation for the )rthodox members The Orthodox Churches in the WCC are ivided into two groups namely the Eastern Orthodox and the )riental Orthodox. Among the Eastern Orthodox the Greeks nd the Russians are counted. Among the Oriental Orthodox ıe Coptic, The Ethiopian, the Syrian Orthodox, Armenian etc re counted. The new President from the Eastern Orthodox is ıe Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana & Albania and from the )riental Orthodox is the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Church, \boona Poulose. This Patriarch studied in the Princeton 'heological Seminary, New Jersey after I was a student there.

Among the remaining six Presidents, three were women. The Orthodox Churches do not ordain women to priesthood.

The Youth protested that the 150 Central committee gave only 15 % representation to the people below the age of 30, although 25 % was promised. They did not listen to the arguments that there were not enough delegates below the age of 30 in order to fill the promised quota of 25%. Among the youth delegates the majority were girls.

I was happy to greet Cardinal Walter Kasper with whom had worked as co-chairmen in the Assyrian Vatican Dialogue. I greeted Metropolitan Amba Bishoi of the Coptic Church. He responded with the words, " I am angry with you. Because you criticized my Patriarch in Melbourne." I tried to explain what I did in Melbourne in July 2000 when I read a paper about the ecumenical relations of the Assyrian Church. I had stated the fact that we have good relations with all churches except Coptic Church, which insists that we should condemn Nestorius if we want ecumenical relations with the Coptic Church. I do believe the Christian church has come a long way from 431 A.D. when Cyril of Alexandria had criticized Nestorius of Constantinople for suggesting the title Christotokos (Mother of Christ) instead of Theotokos(Mother of God).

Metropolitan George Saleeba of Lebanon, Metropolitan Aprem Karim Cyril of USA, Metropolitan Mata Rohom of Syria and others were very friendly. Of course all Indian Delegates were my friends.

obel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, rchbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury and others ldressed the assembly. The President of Brazil, Lula da Silva ıanked WCC for supporting the Liberation of Brazil from ıilitary dictatorship two decades earlier. President has ınounced in June 2006 his intention of running for a second rm as President of Brazil in order to complete the reforms he ıd begun for the poor people of Brazil. It looks like that he ıight win a second term.

his was my first opportunity to attend the WCC assembly. he next assembly will be in 2013, seven years later. The ɔuntry of the venue of the assembly will be chosen later.

ı the past 58 years since the beginning of WCC the church aders have met in nine different countries. Holland, USA, ıdia, Sweden, Kenya, Canada, Australia, Zimbabwe, Brazil re the countries where the WCC assemblies have met. We ould meet in Korea, Russia, Germany, China and even Iraq, the there is peace in that country after 7 years. I am sure that ıere will not be much demand for getting their country as the enue like the World Cup or Olympic games.

## n New York

he WCC assembly ended on Thursday 23 rd February. Next ıorning we were to vacate our rooms and go to our different ountries. A few of us had extended our stay for 2 or 3 days to ave a look at Brazil. I was with the majority trying to return n Friday. We got up before 4 a.m. and started from our hotels ı a small van and got transferred to a bigger bus with other

delegates. When we reached the airport at Port Alegra we v about a thousand people. All trying to get into the queue f Some were afraid that we will not have a seat if we are bac the queue. Some airlines overbook their flights.

Some queues were slow in issuing boarding passes. They not tell us early that some flights are delayed. When we f for 1 hour and 50 minutes from Porto Alegra we reached Paulo. Then we were not sure which queue to get in to get boarding pass to New York. There was a lot of delay. T they said that the flight is cancelled we have to wait till n to catch a flight to New York. They were kind enough to g a voucher to a hotel. I had to call New York to tell about delay in the flight. The Mobile I was carrying with me wi Brazil card did not work. It took about one hour to go do from the room .in the 10th floor to the front desk to enq several times how to telephone. The young people in Reception counter told me that I should call from the phon the room direct to New York. Since room telephones in ho are very expensive I tried other alternatives. Nothing work Finally they released the lock of the phone in my room ar got connected to New York.

I guess that the hotel people lock the external telephon Otherwise children may talk to friends abroad and a huge will come before the hotel people realize. They are v experienced with a wide variety of guests. Some hotels t an advance amount from the guest for the telephone calls. T hotel was kind enough not to demand an advance from r Looking at my cassock and cross they must have thought to trustworthy.

The flight from Sau Paulo to New York was at night. There was a long queue again. That flight was about ten hours duration. I tried to sleep in my seat. But before I got a good sleep they come with food and so the sleep was interrupted.

On Saturday 25th February at about 8 a.m.I reached JFKennedy Airport . Mr.Simon Thermadom had come early to meet me. The flight was late. At the immigration I had some difficulty as I had forgotten the number of the house of Geevarghese Emmatty in Wild Rose Avenue in Bergenfield where I was supposed to stay during my short visit to USA. I had the telephone number and other details. Still the lady at the immigration insisted that I should give her the number of the house. The address list was in the baggage, which was checked-in baggage, and I would not get it till I cleared the immigration area. So she checked the computer to look at my previous record. She asked me who lives in Morton Grove. I replied that was the address of my Patriarch. Then she asked me who lived in the Bronx because I have written that address during my 2000 visit to New York. I replied that was another friend of mine where I stayed or visited in 2002. After some time she let me go. I knew that I have to have the address and the phone number anytime I pass through USA.

There is strict check to find out whether anybody is plotting something against the Empire State Building. When you have one of the top ten buildings in the world the police have to be extra vigilant to detect the people with criminal tendencies. I could not do much on Saturday except to telephone our Catholicos Patriarch residing in Morton Grove near Chicago.

Since His Holiness was in some meeting I could not tal him. Later at night I tried but did not succeed as His Holi had gone out. Anyhow on Sunday noon after the Holy Qurl I telephoned to the Catholicos Patriarch and reported al my safe journey and the conclusion of the the 9th assembl the World Council of Churches in Brazil which I had attended. I promised His Holiness that I would send hi detailed report after reaching Trichur after a week.

On Sunday 26th February I celebrated Holy Qurbana in Mari Shleeha Church, in Yonkers, New York. Some of Trichur people were there. I was happy to see my old c mate Mr.E.I.Paul , elder brother of Geevarghese Emmatty whom I was staying in Bergenfield ,New Jersey. E I. Paul his wife Katherine had come o stay or about six month take care of the grand child. Many grandparents visit t grandchildren in the USA. As he was l returning from the U this week it was his only occasion for him to attend our Qurb in the USA and to meet our other members from Kerala. Kerala people are smaller in number compared to the Assyri from Iran and Iraq who were regularly worshipping in parish. The priest Fr.Gevarghese Sulaiman told me that th was an engagement party the previous night in that parish many people were tired and hence not present in the chu service.

On Monday 27th February Munna, son of Geevargh Emmatty, drove me to the JFK airport in New York. He toc lot of short cuts to avoid the heavy traffic of the evening ti in New York.

## Chapter 7

# Third Trip to UAE.

Feb 28 to March 3, 2006

## Dubai & Sharjah

On Monday 27th February I flew from JFKennedy airport in New York to Dubai. It was a non stop flight of about 12 hours. We reached Dubai on Tuesday evening of Dubai time, which I think is 8 or 9 hours ahead of New York time. Thimothy Mooken, Chacko Konikara, Engineer Zaia George and Mr. Sada were there to receive me. In a hurry I took one black baggage, which looked like mine and walked out. After talking to our people I wanted to take my address list to check a phone number. When opened the bag I realized that it was a wrong one. I rushed in and replaced it and walked out.

Thank God that I checked it before reaching the home of Thimothy Mooken where I spent the night. Had I gone there without opening my bag in the airport the Dubai Airport police would have knocked at my door in the early morning to explain the reason of leaving my bag in the airport. Nobody is allowed to leave the luggage unattended even for one minute. If I told them that I took by mistake some other passenger's bag I could be taken into custody for stealing somebody else's bag. Almighty God's protecting hand was with me.

When I rushed inside the baggage clearing area I told a police man that I was going to replace my bag. The police man looked at my hat and cross and "He is a man of God. Then how can he commit such a blunder."

Actually when I reached near the baggage area I was wo
that somebody will see me and suspect of some soul pla
the grace of God, *Allah* was the only person near that
The real owner must have gone inside to make a complair
the theft of his bag. I do hope that he must have come ba
that area before going home after making his comp
regarding the disappearance of his bag.

The next day I moved to the house of Paul Chackola w
grandfather was my neighbour in Trichur. I had stayed
him during my April trip. But when I visited again in Oct
we could not meet each other, as he was on a business tr
Doha. He could not get a flight from Doha to Dubai, altho
of short duration.

On Friday March 3rd I celebrated Holy Qurbana in a
belonging to the CSI Church. I preached in Malayalam du
their Holy Communion Service at 8 a.m. As soon as we finis
the CSI service I rushed to the hall where our people
already gathered.

The hall was full with our people from India and s
Assyrians. The widow of Qasha Badal of California atten
The Assyrians present in the CSI Hall for Holy Qurban
Sharjah on 3 March 2006 were:

Engineer ZIA MARCUS GEORGE & his wife
SADIE KHAIL TOMA & His family
ASHOR SARKIS & His WIFE
WARD ZAYA & His wife Rita
NAMROUD (MONER) & His wife
NINOS ASKER& His

Eng. Yousif Tarie
Family of Lazar
Family of Samie Kaisar
Helen Zia
Faten Kedo

Qasha Thomas Thermadom from India came to assist me for the Qurbana. As it is expensive to bring a priest or deacon. from India I suggested some body working in UAE should be willing to be ordained a deacon, if we want future for our UAE parish. Majo Thomas , son of Qasha Thomas, who is working in UAE assisted us in making fire for the censor (*Pirma)* etc. In most of our churches in India we have a paid sexton to do these duties. I strongly feel that young people in our church should do these duties voluntarily. Such duties will help them to come early before the service starts. It will be a preparation for them to think about becoming a clergyman, if God calls them. In the Catholic Church they have the altar boys

I visited three Assyrian homes after Qurbana. And it was already evening. Engineer Zaia George took me to the house of Paul Chackola in Karama where I took my supper and packed.. Later Thimothy Mooken took me to Dubai airport for the return journey. . On March 4th I was back in Trichur and back to work. I was extremely tired of a long journey.

Two news items that appeared on the **New Indian Express** daily dated May 22, 2006 are of interest to the readers on the topic of the Gulf in general.

**Gulf: Strikes could endanger jobs**

By Arjun Ragunath

Thiruvananthapuram, May 21

Posing a threat to the overseas job prospects to the Inc labour militancy is becoming rampant in the Gulf coun which have witnessed over a dozen strikes involving thous of Indians over the last one year.

The obvious reason for all the strikes is the demand for b wages and living conditions. Many prestigious projects as the Burj Dubai, which will be the tallest building i world when completed, have been affected by these st which have sometimes turned violent.

Nepalis, Pakistanis and Philipinos are also involved i strikes, but at a lesser degree than the Indians.

According to recruiting agents, the rapid spread of la militancy, one of the major reasons for the industrial stagn in the state, in the Gulf need to be taken seriously. If unche Indians might lose the emerging job opportunity in the construction sector as employers may opt for workers other countries, they feel.

The latest labour strike involving Indians was reported Dubai last week. As many as 7,000 India workers of E Constructioin Company declined to report for work on 16, demanding increase in salary. On the same day abou workers of Al Huda. Contracting Company in Dubai stag protest demanding unpaid salaries.

In April, nearly 2,000 workers, majority of them Indian the Al Ahmadiyah Contracting Company, who were invo

in the construction of over 100 high-rise buildings in Dubai, stopped work and went on a rampage demanding better wages and working conditions. The striking workers beat up company officials, damaged several vehicles, buildings and office documents.

This occurred a few days after another 1,500 workers, including over 1,000 Indians, of Consolidated Contractors Company. Bahrain, went on a strike demanding better living conditions and risk allowances.

## Violent demonstration by Indian workers

Express news Service

Thiruvanthapuram, May 21: With Labour militancy becoming rampant, the construction on Burj Dubai came to a standstill on March 22 after the workers, agitated over low wages and living conditions, took out a violent demonstration causing massive destruction to properties.

Non-Resident Keralites Affairs Secretary Jiji Thomson, who recently held talks with Maldivian authorities for the release of several Malayali workers held up there following labour disputes, told Express that the Maldivian company authorities had opined that the Malayali labourers were of more aggressive nature compared to others.

"The demands of the workers may be genuine. But they will have to consider the local laws and conditions, " the NORKA secretary said.

# Fifty two Foreign Trips

## 1961 – 2006

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | England, Geneva, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq | Oct 1961 to Sept | |
| 2. | England, USA, Iraq | Aug 1966 to Oct | |
| 3. | USA, Canada, England, Germany & Iraq | April- June | 1 |
| 4. | Pattaya, Thailand | June 15-27 | 1 |
| 5. | Germany (Gostar, Duisburg, Arenshorst, Berlin, Regensburg) & Amsterdam | Sept 7 –19, | 1 |
| 6 | Amsterdam | July | 1 |
| 7. | Germany (Friburg) Stockholm, Switzerland (Zurich, Berne), England | 1983 | |
| 8. | Baghdad, Iraq | Feb | 1 |
| 9. | Sweden (Jorkoping), Belgium, Holland. England & USA (Chicago, California, Missouri, Ohio) | Sept- Oct | 1 |
| 10. | Israel (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth) Italy (Rome) | May | |
| 11. | Australia (Sydney, Melbourne) | Aug | 1 |
| 12. | England, USA, Belgium (Louvain), Holland | July- Aug | 1 |
| 13. | Australia (Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra) | April | 1 |
| 14. | Iraq, Baghdad & Mosul | March | 1 |
| 15. | Geneva, Germany (Bown, Munich, Oberau, Rome) | June | 1 |
| 16. | USA, (San Diego, Hugson Chicago, Columbia Ann Arbor, Bowling Green) Canada (Toronto, Mississuaga, Hamilion) | May 9-30 | 1 |
| 17. | USA (California, Chicago, Washington & New York | May 14-June 3, | 1 |
| 18. | England, Moscow | 28 Aug-Sept 17, | 1 |
| 19. | USA, (Los Angeles, Chicago, Modesto), Tokyo | Aug | 1 |
| 20. | Sri Lanka (Colombo and Kandy) | Oct | 1 |
| 21. | U.K., (Oxford, Rugby) Austria | May - June | 1 |
| 22. | Vienna | Feb | 1 |
| 23. | England, USA & Canada | June - July | 1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 24. USA (Washington, Chicago & Boston) | Aug | 1995 |
| 25. Israel & Egypt | Oct - Nov | 1995 |
| 26. Vienna, Denmark & Sweden | Feb - March | 1996 |
| 27. USA (California, Chicago) | May 9 - June | 1996 |
| 28. Syria (Aleppo, Hassake, Qamishly, Damascus | Oct | 1996 |
| 29. Vienna, England, Germany & Amsterdam | Feb - March | 1997 |
| 30. USA, (Chicago, Iowa, Atlanta, California) | June - July | 1997 |
| 31. Lebanon & Iran | March | 1998 |
| 32. USA (New York, Chicago, Florida, California ) England | Oct - Nov | 1998 |
| 33. USA (Chicago, Detroit, Iowa,) Canada & Germany( Berlin, Wilterburg, Munich, Bohmte) | April - May | 1999 |
| 34. Italy (Rome, Venice, Ventimiglia), Germany (Frankfurt, Born, Munich) | 1- 22, Oct | 1999 |
| 35. Thailand (Bangkok) | 25 - 31, Oct | 1999 |
| 36. Vienna, Italy, England | Feb - March | 2000 |
| 37. Australia, (Sydney & Melbourne) & New Zealand | June - July | 2000 |
| 38. Amsterdam | July - Aug | 2000 |
| 39. USA (New York, New Jersey, Texas, Harvard, Italy | 27 Sept-15 Oct | 2000 |
| 40. Germany (Frankfurt, Munich, Halle) | Nov, Dec | 2000 |
| 41. USA (Chicago, Washington D.C. , Florida, Texas & Indiana | J une 1- 3 July | 2001 |
| 42. Vienna , Chicago, New York, New Jersey | Feb 25 - March18 | 2002 |
| 43. Singapore, USA, (Chicago Alabama, Austin, Dallas) Germany, Rome | Oct14 - Nov16, | 2002 |
| 44. Salzburg, Rugby, London, Munich | May 18 - June 15 | 2003 |
| 45. Germany, USA and Rome | Oct 2 - Nov 2 | 2003 |
| 46. Orlando, Chicago | May 4 -17 | 2004 |
| 47. Nine Cities in USA and Canada | 2 July - August 30 | 2004 |
| 48. London, U.K. | Nov 12 - 23 | 2004 |
| 49. U.K. & UAE | April 6 - 23 | 2005 |
| 50. USA | August 16 - 26 | 2005 |
| 51. UAE, USA, Qatar | 16 Oct - 16Nov | 2005 |
| 52. BRAZIL, USA & UAE | 12 Feb - 4 March | 2006 |

# The Airlines I travelled

1 Air France
2 Air India
3 Alitalia
4 American Airlines
5 Austrian
6 British Airways
7 Danish
8 El Al (Israel)
9 Emirates
10 Gulf Air
11 Iraqi Airways
12 Japan Airlines
13 Korean Air
14 Kuwait Airways
15 Lufthansa (Germany)
16 North West Airways
17 Panam
18 Qatar Airways
19 Scandinavian
20 Singapore Airlines
21 Sree Lanka Airways
22. Swiss Air
23. Thai Airways
24. TWA

**Domestic**

1. Indian Airlines
2. Jet Airways
3. East West Airlines
4. Sahara
5. Paramount
6. NEPC Airlines

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5. Not So Strange: An Autobiography, Part II ..... pp 236, 1991
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22. America Revisited ..... pp. 148,
23. From Baghdad to Chicago ..... pp. 168,
24. Australian Assyrians ..... pp. 132,
25. Belgium and Holland, via U.K. & U.S.A. ..... pp. 124,
26. Sydney to Canberra ..... pp. 128,
27. The Assyrians in Iraq ..... pp. 112,
28. Germany via Vienna ..... pp. 140,
29. Washington New York ..... pp. 133,
30. London to Moscow ..... pp. 134,
31. Los Angels to Tokyo ..... pp. 136,
32. Oxford to Austria ..... pp. 144,
33. Salzburg to Boston ..... pp. 140,
34. Israel, Scandinavia & U.S.A ..... pp. 112,
35. Hassake to Hollywood ..... pp. 112,
36. Italy, Liban & Iran ..... pp. 112,
37. To U.K. Via U.S.A ..... pp. 104,
38. USA, Canada, Europe & Thailand ..... pp. 104,
39. Austria to Australia ..... pp. 104,
40. India to Indiana ..... pp. 112,
41. Two Trips in 2002 ..... pp. 104,
42. Budapest to Rugby ..... pp. 128,
43. UAE via U.K. and USA ..... pp. 120,
44. Sharjah, Qatar &Brazil ..... pp. 104,

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1. Assyrian Fathers
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3. Teach Yourself Aramaic Vol II

# About the Author

Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mooken) was bor in Trichur, Kerala, India in June 1940. Educated in India England and America, he specialized in Church History. H was the President of the Church History Association of India (1976-82).

After his intermediate course of two years in St.Thoma College, Trichur (Madras University) George Davis Mooke studied for four years in Leonard Theological College, Jabalpu and earned **B.D**.(Bachelor of Divinity) degree of Serampor Senate. He spent a year of Postgraduate studies in St. Bonifac College, Warminster in England and visited Switzerland, Rome Greece, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria etc in 1962. After tw years of service in the church in Trichur he earned two master' degrees in Church History, one from the United Theologica College, Bangalore (**M.Th.** of Serampore, 1966) and the othe from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (**S.T.M** degree, 1967).

He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (**Th. D.**) degre at Princeton Theological Seminary, U.S.A., when he wa consecrated bishop in Baghdad, Iraq in 1968. In 1976 he earne his **D. Th**. (Doctor of Theology) degree from Serampor University, near Calcutta. Mahatma Gandhi University Kottayam conferred on him **Ph. D,** degree in the Departmen of Syriac language & Literature in 2002

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961, he became a priest on the day he completed twenty-five years of age on 13 June, 1965. He was consecrated bishop on 21st September 1968 and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later in Baghdad.

His biography appears in the **International Who's Who of Intellectuals, Vol. 6**, Cambridge (1985), the **International Directory of Distinguished Leadership**, first Edition, U.S.A. and others. He has 65 books in the field of Church History, biography, Travelogues, humour and such.

He was given 'Men of Achievement ' Award of the International Biographical Center, Cambridge, England in 1984, and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center, Venice for his Cultural and ecumenical achievements. He was Co-Chairman of the Assyrian – Vatican Dialogue Committee based in Rome. In March 2004 he was given **International Poet of the Year 2004** award in Orlando, Florida.

Since 1968, he is Head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organizations all over India.

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# Photos


*Page 94* *Sharjah, UAE. Indians attending Qurbana on October 2005. Pallipuram Lazar, Neyyan Jo Lazar, Mrs.Bindu Thimothy, Francis John, Da Idiculla, Ronny Kurien and others are seen.*

*Page 95* *YMCA at Sharjah meeting National Emirates Scho Chacko Konikara and Mar Aprem with the offi bearers of the YMCA*

*Page 95* *Qurbana at St.John Assyrian Church in Chicago 23rd October 2005. Fr.Thomas Mathew, Fr.Kl Deacon Steven and Deacon Paul are seen.*

*Page 96* *Mar Aprem Archdeacon Dr. Ian Youn, Samuel Hen Mrs. Anly Sam, with a Sre Lankan baby in t Anglican Chaplain's residence in Doha 11th November 2005*

*Page 97* *26 Oct 2005. Blessing the home of Lijo Antony Tampa, Florida. Left to Right: Aneena, Joshua, M Aprem, Liju (son of M.F.Antony)*

*Page 97* *Mar Aprem with his eldest brother Jos Mook (right), brother –in-law Prof.Dr.Alexander Alex Tampa on 26 October 2005*

*Page 98* *The Indians after attending the Holy Qurbana at t Jacobite Syrian Church in Doha on 11 Novemb 2005.*

*Page 99* *Indian Ambassador to Qatar Dr. George Joseph, M Aprem & John in Doha on 13 Nov 2005*

*Page 100* *Blessing the house of Anly Samuel in Doha.*

*Page 100* *After Qurbana on 23rd October 2005.Left Right:Engineer Sanil Mooken (son of Windso*

*brother of Mar Aprem), Mar Aprem, Leela Alex(sister of Mar Aprem), Leela's daughter Dr.Asha Furlow of Chicago and her brother Dr.Saj Alex of Indianapolis.*

*Page 101* *Indian Orthodox Bishop Augin Mar Dionysius and parish priest in Doha. Mar Aprem in the middle. November 2005*

*Page 101* *Brazil, February 2006 At WCC Assembly Metropolitan George Saleeba of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Lebanon conveys greetings of Mar Narsai Metropolitan of Lebanon to Mar Aprem.*

*Page 102* *Indians attending holy Qurbana in the Assyrian Church in Yonkers, New York. on 26 February 2006*

*Page 103* *Qurbana on 3rd March 2006 in Sharjah, UAE. Assyrians and Indians are attending the Holy Service.*

*Page 104* *Paul Chakola in Karama where Mar Aprem stayed took him to bless his show room of Plasma TV made in Taiwan.*

*Page 104* *The Assyrians and Keralites are attending Holy Qurbana in Sharjah on March 3rd. 2006.*

*Cover 2* *Sharja. After Qurbana on Friday 21st Oct the Assyrians and Indiana at the National Emirates School. Mar Aprem and FR. P. K. Raphael in the middle*

*Cover 3* *During Assembly of WCC in Brazil Dr. Joseph Mar Irenaus Suffragan Metropolitan in the middle. Mar Aprem on the left. Dr.Alexander Karackel of the Indian Orthodox Church are in conversation with delegates from Kerala during the lunch break February 2005*

Indians attending Qurbana in Sharjah UAE on 21 October. Pallipuram Lazar, Neyyan John Lazar, A.J. Thimothy, Mrs Bindu Moffat, Franco John, Daies Idiculla, Bonny Kurienand others are seen

YMCA at Sharjah. Chacko Konikara and Mar Aprem Metropolitan with the office bearers of the YMCA

Qurbana in St.Johns Church , Chicago. Mar Aprem celebrating holy Qurbana on Sunday 23rd Oct. Fr.Thomas Mathew, Fr.Klutz, Deacon Steven and Deacon Paul are seen.

*Mar Aprem Archdeacon Dr. Ian Youn, Samuel Henry, Mrs. Anly Sam, with a Sre Lankan baby in the Anglican Chaplain's residence in Doha on 11th November 2005*

Mar Aprem with his brother Jos Mooken (right) and brother-in-law Prof.Alexander Alex in Tampa, Florida on 26 October 2005

Blessing the home of Liju Antony at Tampa, Florida on 26 October 2005. Left to Right:Aneena, Joshua, Mar Aprem, Liju (son of M.F.Antony)

Indian Ambassador to Qatar Dr. George Joseph, Mar Aprem & John in Doha
on 13 Nov 2005

Blessing the house of Anly Samuel in Doha

After Holy Qurbana in St.John Assyrian Church in Chicago on 23 October 2005 . Left to Right: Engineer Sanil Mooken(son o Windsor, brother of Mar Aprem), Mar Aprem Metropolitan, Leel Alex(sister of Mar Aprem), Leela's daughter Dr.Asha Furlow, an her brother Dr.Saj Alex of Indianapolis.

Indian Orthodox Bishop Augin Mar Dionysius and parish priest in Doha. Mar Aprem in the middle.

Metropolitan Mor George Saliba of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Lebanon is conveying the greetings of the Assyrian Metropolitan of Lebanon , Mar Narsai de Baz to Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India when they met in the WCC assembly in Brasil in February 2006. Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church His Holiness Mar Zaka Iwas I of Damascus is a good friend of His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV , Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East now residing in Chicago. Photo copied from New York Times.

Assyrian members are seen along with Indians during Qurbana on 3rd March 2006. Fargo Ward Zaia and his wife Rita Zaia are seen first and second in the second row. The 4th from the left is the widow of late Qasha Badal Piro of California.

Indian members of our Church attending Qurbana
in Sharja, UAE on Friday March 3rd, 2006

Plasma TV made in Taiwan. Mar Aprem stayed with Paul Chakola
Karama, Dubai. Lijo Mannukaden, a cousin of Paul is the first from th

WCC assembly, Brasil in February 2006. Mar Aprem is the first and Joseph Mar Irenaus of the Mar Thoma Church is the 4th from left. Prof. Alexander Karackel is the 3rd

Mar Aprem and Engineer Zaia Marcus George in front of St.Philip's Chapel in Sharjah, UAE

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